



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

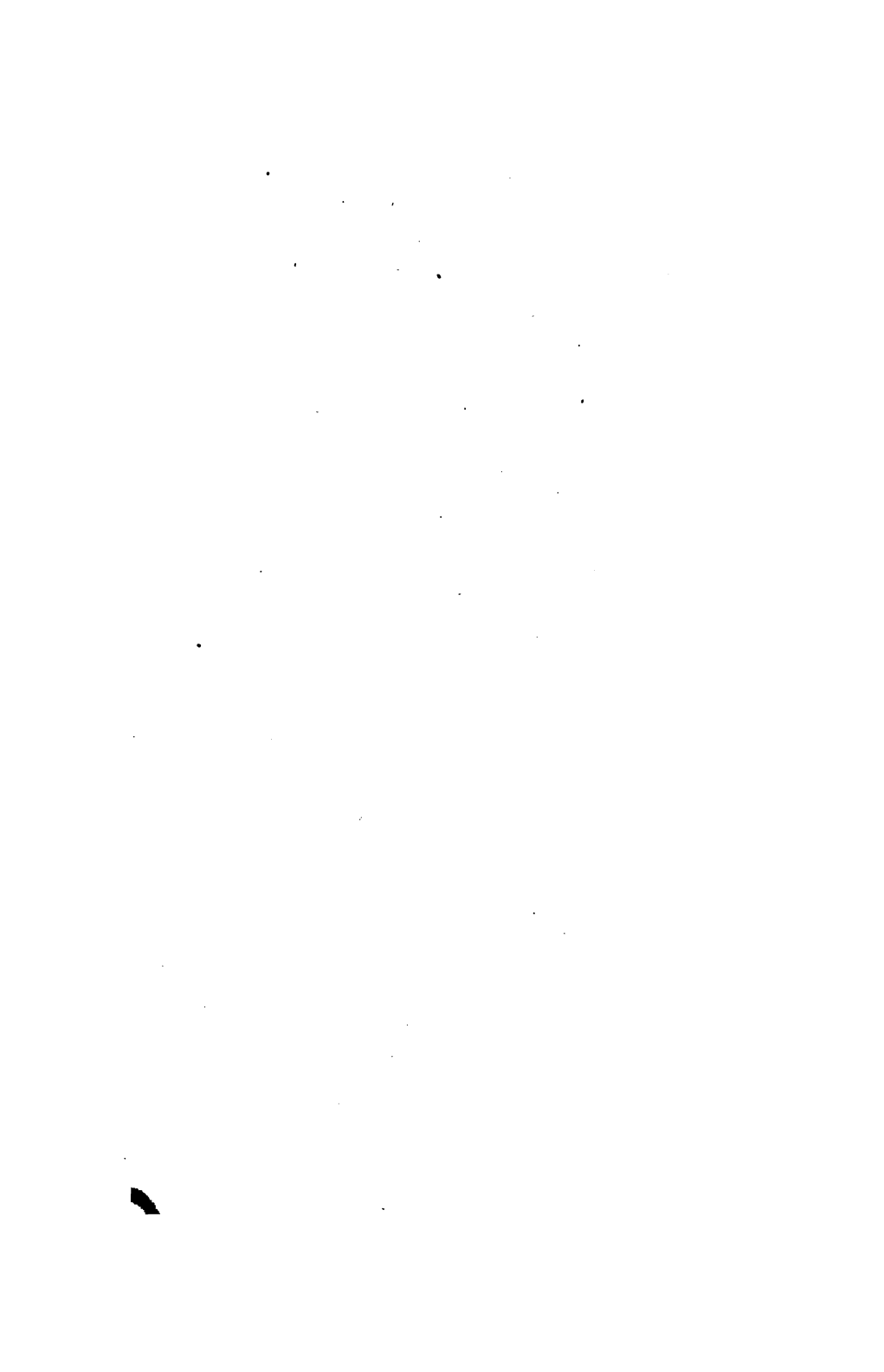
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





6000553500







F O R T U N E.

A Romance of Life.

BY D. T. COULTON, ESQ.

"Je rends au public ce qu'il m'a prêté: j'ai emprunté de lui la matière de cet ouvrage; il est juste que, l'ayant achevé avec toute l'attention pour la vérité dont je suis capable, et qu'il mérite de moi, je lui en fasse la restitution."

LA BRUYÈRE.

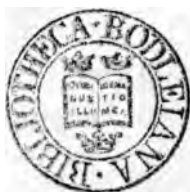
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED FOR HENRY COLBURN,
BY HIS SUCCESSORS, HURST AND BLACKETT,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1853.

249. v. 304.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.



FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.


Men of that large profession that can speak
To every cause and things mere contraries,
Till they are hoarse again, yet all be law!—
That with most quick agility can turn
And re-turn; can make knots and undo them,
Give forked council, take provoking gold
On either hand, and put it up. These men
He knew would thrive.

BEN JONSON.

MR. LANETON, when his resolution was once taken, was not the man to let grass grow under his feet. When he received Bellstar's note, firmly declining the proposal made to him, he felt extremely indignant at his "ingratitude," as he termed it.

"This is all the thanks I get for my kindness!" he exclaimed. "This is the return made to me for all the indulgence I have shown to him! Now I wash my hands of him. I have quite done with him and his affairs."

Whenever any one talks of washing his hands of this or of that person, we are naturally reminded of Pilate, who believed that by so simple an act he could absolve himself from the guilt of shedding innocent blood. But people who wash their hands in a figurative way in our times, are seldom quite so cool and indifferent as Pilate. They intend it to be understood that they are careless what becomes of the offender; but secretly they hope that he will be brought to the gallows in this world, and be consigned to eternal perdition in the next. In that washing of the hands there is always malignity—sometimes passionate, sometimes cool; but always black, hateful, and unforgiving. When in your wrath and vexation, dear reader, this disposition comes over you, and you feel as if, by rubbing your hands together, you could wash away the ties of blood or friendship, and rid your breast of all remembrances that might inspire pity; of all charity that might plead for forgiveness; of all hope that might suggest amendment; then pause, and recollect how bad is the first precedent for this hand-washing, and how little it will avail you in His presence, who is long-suffering, gracious



and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.

When Mr. Laneton washed his hands of any one, he meant by it, that he turned the miserable and undone creature over to one or other of his respectable solicitors. As I have a salutary dread of indicating those gentlemen too particularly, I must beg to introduce them in these pages under figurative names. Mr. Laneton only dealt with the principals; he never met the junior partners, who are in general expressly reserved to "do" the insolence of their respective offices; and therefore the principals only will appear in this narrative.

Mr. Stone was a gentleman who had grown grey in his pleasant labours. He had a snug little practice, producing him some five or six thousand a year. He had three sons, whom he designed to succeed him; and, as he brought them all up in his office, and gave them a per centage on his profits, they soon become uncommonly sharp lads, and could find and keep a scent as skilfully as any youths of their standing in the whole profession. Mr. Stone was a hale, jocular, long-tongued, bustling man, accustomed to lament the softness of his nature, and to

dilate on the large sums he lost annually, because he could not bear to press too hardly on distress. He was a capital man of business—sanguine, active, and indefatigable. He was always for “doing something,” and for keeping all the machinery of the law in perpetual motion. He was uncommonly cheerful and comfortable in his manner, and had a homely style of speech—interspersing his talk with familiar proverbs—which was exceedingly pleasant. Between him and Mr. Laneton there was an excellent understanding. The capitalist gave him a great deal of business, but always said, “Mind, I never did, and never will, pay a shilling of law charges;” and as it is a general rule of law, that borrowers and debtors pay costs of all kinds, this arrangement worked very well both for solicitor and client. When Mr. Laneton washed his hands of any one who had the misfortune to be in his books, Stone took lawful possession of him, and picked his bones very clean indeed before he let him go. All such persons he regarded as crumbs, which, having fallen from the great man’s table, became rightfully his property; and of course, as Mr. Laneton was never called on to pay any of his costs, though it

was Mr. Laneton who employed him, he had no particular scruple about making the most of the victims who fell into his clutches. But his natural tenderness of heart led him to treat them delicately. He practised the advice old Isaac Walton gives the angler—he handled them as though he loved them. Though a capital man for drawing up mortgages, and for all the work of foreclosing and selling off, he was not acute enough for those more complicated legal affairs, with which Mr. Laneton, in spite of his dislike to them, had sometimes to deal; and hence his employment of a second solicitor.

Mr. Flint was a much younger and keener man than Mr. Stone. He had the profile of a hawk, and as glaring and vigilant an eye. From perpetually working his left organ of vision in the art of shrewd speculation, it had fallen into a habit of twinkling by itself; so that all the fine muscles around were in a continual tremor, and such a network of little wrinkles was formed about the eye, as was quite wonderful to see. When this twinkling eye was turned upon you, it immediately suggested the notion, that it was calculating what could be made of you, and how you would cut up, if you could be en-

trapped into his legal shambles. He had a low forehead, and a fine crop of wiry curling hair. His faculties did not belie the sharpness of his aspect. He was so much more than a match for any one who could be pitted against him, that it was a common saying with those who knew him well, that his equal must be sought in some other place than on earth.

As his connections were very high, he was enabled to play a bolder game than meaner practitioners dared attempt. He had a cousin who was a taxing-master in Chancery, who had no end of money to lend out at good interest, and who got the pick of Flint's borrowing clients. His brother-in-law was familiarly known as "six-clerk Jones;" he had an uncle on the bench, and numerous other relatives engaged in different departments of the law. The Flints were, in fact, a legal family; and being all highly respectable—tip-top Lincoln's Inn and Chancery people—they naturally stuck together, and gave one another all the help they could. Very often, when Flint had got his clients safe—as safe as sheep are in a slaughter-house—he took a high tone with them, and spoke as if he were dictating to

them from the woolsack. He was no pettifogger, he said, to do as they told him. He had to consider what was due to his reputation, and what the profession expected from him. If they were not satisfied with his principles, they might go elsewhere; and then he would begin to rate them soundly, just as a man with a chain round the neck of his dog, flogs him for disobedience, giving him a cut here and there, where he knows the blows will pain most, and cost him—the flogger—least expenditure of strength. When his client continued refractory, he took his own course in spite of him, and had once or twice been complimented from the bench for the disposition he had evinced to avoid litigation; for he was generally averse to all litigation which proceeded much farther than his own office. When a case came before any of the tribunals, he knew there was some chance of its being settled; and this was so contrary to his policy, that at the last moment he would propose any thing in the way of concession, rather than have the cause formally heard, and a decision pronounced. Every postponement, in his skilful hands, furnished grounds for new complication; so that the

longer a cause progressed, the more issues were raised, and the less probability was there of its ever being settled.

It may seem wonderful that, notwithstanding all this, Mr. Flint should have a first-rate practice. But it is, as moralists would say, "a melancholy fact," that very honest people have no kind of objection to a roguish, or, as they would say, a keen solicitor, believing that all the roguery will be directed against their opponents. In the belief that every lawyer is bound to do the best he can for his client, they are quite ready to overlook, if they do not zealously applaud, any little excess of zeal, or deviation from truth and right, into which the said lawyer may fall. But in the expectation that they are to benefit by his sharpness, it sometimes happens that they find themselves mistaken. The favour he shows them is that which the Cyclops designed for Ulysses—

"Noman shall be the last I will devour."

Whoever came to Mr. Flint, found him at first the most agreeable man of business that any embarrassed gentleman could desire to meet with. He smoothed all difficulties as if by enchantment; stayed all

adverse proceedings by the magic of his word ; and was so prodigal in his offers of assistance, that one would think he had all California at his disposal. An introduction from him never failed to open the long purses of the six-clerks and the taxing-master. He treated his clients, in short, as Bruce says the Abyssinian traveller does his oxen. He drove them forward by pleasant ways, by easy stages, and with light burdens, so as to keep them contented and well-fleshed until he had need of them as food for himself. Then, when they had served his turn as beasts of burden, and they answered no other purpose than to be eaten themselves, he would cut his steaks from their buttocks without mercy. Many a client had Mr. Flint consumed in this way. Vain were their protestations, as they wasted daily under his knife, that they never expected to be served so. His halter was round their necks, his brand on their ribs, and there was no escape for them. The more flesh he sliced from them, the less able were they to resist or complain.

Yet such is the credulity of our species, when tempted by the prospect of advantage, that Mr. Flint could boast of his levee-days,

when a crowd of anxious suitors was kept waiting in his dingy anteroom. He had quite as much business as he could get through; and he began at this time to indulge freely in the luxury of that insolence and contempt which were so congenial to his nature, but which only well-established practitioners can afford to exhibit.

If these portraits be not attractive, I protest that the fault is not mine. I have not the art to convert the features of a Green-acre or a Rush into beauty. My pencil is too homely—my colours too sober for that. Civilisation, though it restrains open violence, does not get rid of the propensity to fraud, injury, and injustice in bad men. Perverse ingenuity, and remorseless cunning, find ample room for their exercise in the intricacies of that legal maze, which grows more complex with each succeeding generation. "Thank Heaven! we are out of *Nisi Prius* for one evening at least," cried a popular orator of the Lower House, after listening for six weary hours to the flimsy sophistry of advocates, who could not forget their habits of special pleading, even when debating in the Legislature a question of paramount national importance. If *Nisi Prius*

be so intolerable for six hours, what must Chancery be for a whole lifetime? Gentlemen and legislators, it is for you to say whether the system under which our Stones and Flints thrive—and who does not know one or both of them?—can be a very excellent one for the community they prey on, and whether there must not be a great revolution in law, before it can become in reality what it professes to be in theory—the perfection of common sense?

When Mr. Laneton had washed his hands of poor Bellstar, and despatched a note to the worthy Mr. Stone announcing the fact, he prepared for more important business. He thought he at last perceived his way to a settlement of the lengthened litigation in regard to the Ashley estates, and he had made an appointment with the clever Mr. Flint to meet him on that subject. Punctual to the moment, Flint arrived, and, used as his client was to that extraordinary working of his eye already noticed, he could not resist the thought that its sinister twinkling had just then especial reference to himself. He, however, curtly opened the conference by stating his desire to have the litigation brought to a close, and by saying that he had himself had

some communication with the solicitor on the other side, offering to pay all his costs, and to settle an annuity on the orphan girls, if opposition on their part was entirely withdrawn. As their solicitor had met him in a candid spirit, and had received his proposal favourably, he now wanted to know how soon the whole matter might be wound up.

There was a great deal in this communication to displease Mr. Flint. In the first place, he altogether set his face against any client of his presuming to think or act for himself; and secondly, he had not the most remote intention of suffering that particular cause to get out of his hands for several years to come. For, when he got hold of a good suit, he always regarded the property in dispute as existing for his sole and especial use; and he felt as indignant at the idea of its being removed from his control, as if the fee-simple of it were vested in himself. He began, therefore, to recite the numerous obstacles that existed to any thing like the speedy settlement which Mr. Laneton desired; he dilated on the difficulty of getting reports from masters' offices; enlarged on the numerous points which had been raised

in the course of the litigation, and which seemed to interlace and depend on one another in such a way, that they got into a tangle directly either one was disturbed; and finally, he wrapped up a confused mass of details in such technical jargon, as he knew must be unintelligible even to the clear sense of the shrewd man before him.

To his "explanations" Mr. Laneton listened with fixed attention for nearly an hour—for the lawyer had great confidence in his powers to perplex the clearest intellect by his fluent tongue, and to make all business evaporate in talk; while his auditor was willing to let him go on, that he might discover what his real object was. Having conceived that he had mystified his client sufficiently for one interview, he rose to depart; but Mr. Laneton was determined he should not get off so easily.

"I perceive, Mr. Flint," he said, in a calm but resolute tone, "that you are not willing this matter shall be settled as I wish. You cannot deceive me, Sir. I know how easily obstacles may be raised in law when there is a disposition to raise them, and how quickly they may be removed when there is a desire to remove them. If you cannot

effect such a settlement as I have pointed out, I will find some other solicitor who can."

Flint was not altogether unprepared for this tone, having discovered of late various signs of impatience on the part of his client. He was not then taken aback by it; but his eye twinkled more vigorously as he rejoined—

"Really, Sir, I did not expect such a return from you, after successfully conducting the suit to its present stage. Considering all the difficulties to be encountered, I am bold to say, there is not a lawyer in England who would have done for you as much as I have done."

"That is not the question at present, Mr. Flint. I want to know why, if all parties interested consent, proceedings cannot be stopped at once, and the matter settled?"

"Why," returned the lawyer, "besides all those obstacles which I have already explained to you, as impeding any hasty settlement"—and here he assumed the look and bearing of an incorruptible man—"I must say, I do not think it would be consistent with my duty—that it would be consistent with my reputation—to consent to any such hushing up of this important suit as you desire to effect."

"I am to understand that is your opinion?" Mr. Laneton exclaimed with energy.

"The whole case," proceeded Flint, not heeding the interruption, "is now before the Court, and must be carried on in a proper manner, through all the regular stages."

"And how long, do you suppose, Sir, it would take to settle this case in a *regular* way?" asked Mr. Laneton.

"It is impossible to say," replied Flint with great serenity. "I should be sorry to pledge myself in a cause like this to a year or two."

Mr. Laneton's lip trembled with suppressed passion.

"I have heard quite enough, Sir, to determine me," he said. "I shall employ some other solicitor; and I desire you will prepare to deliver up all my papers to my order."

"There is the balance of our account—a rather heavy balance—I suppose you will settle that immediately?" said the lawyer calmly.

"Your bills shall be taxed, Sir—taxed—mind me. I will pay nothing the law does not compel me to pay."

"Oh! certainly not," returned Flint;

"though I must say, the mere costs will never repay me for the time I lost in those journeys to Germany and Italy."

At this he looked hard at his client, who winced a little; for Flint had often referred to those journeys in an ambiguous manner, and had given Mr. Laneton to understand that he had collected, while engaged in them, much curious information, which it was not exactly for his interest to have produced.

"I always told you," Mr. Laneton said, "that I wished you to be handsomely remunerated for the personal attention you gave to the case in that way; and I have no intention to depart from my word."

"That is very liberal," rejoined Flint, feeling he had made some impression; "and I am sure I should wish to assist any gentleman to whom you may please to give the confidence you take from me, to the very utmost of my power. I suppose you would wish me to inform him of every thing?"

"Of every thing," Mr. Laneton returned decisively; though he was not without a nervous feeling on the subject.

"And to deliver up *all* papers which I have hitherto considered as most strictly private?"

"Decidedly so," the capitalist answered;

"a client should have no secrets from his professional adviser."

"Perfectly right," Flint answered with a cheerful air; "and now, Mr. Laneton, as I perfectly understand you, I have only to express my regret that I have failed to satisfy you, and my hope that some other gentleman may be more fortunate. From this hour, I desire that, whatever may happen—whatever turn the suit may take—no responsibility may attach to me. Good-day, Sir!"

He held out his hand to the capitalist, who not only took it, but held it for some moments in his grasp.

"Perhaps," he said with some hesitation—"perhaps, I have been too hasty. At all events, do nothing till you hear from me further; only consider, in the mean time, how far it may be possible to meet my views, and whether it will not greatly facilitate them, if, in all steps necessary to be taken, the other side acts in concert with us."

To this Flint returned a civil answer, and took his departure.

"I must temporize with this man," Mr. Laneton thought, as Flint left the room; "I don't know what injury he may do me in revenge, if I make an enemy of him."

As Flint turned the corner of St James's Square, his face wore as pleasant a sneer as any Timon in that fashionable quarter could desire to see.

"So ho!" said he under his breath; "so ho! this clever gentleman wants to *use* me, does he? He thinks no one has a right to the rewards of industry but himself. Ha! ha! I've got him tight enough; and," here he used an oath, not to be repeated, "I'll make him feel it, too, before I'm done with him."

CHAPTER II.

L'intérêt parle toutes sortes de langues, et joue toutes sortes de personnages, même celui de désintéressé.—ROCHEFOUCAULD.

FLORIAN luxuriantly reclined over a late breakfast, in a noble room of the Green Park mansion. The open sashes disclosed nothing of smoky London, but gave to view a pleasing prospect of verdure and foliage. But above the trees might be seen floating the royal standard from the abode of sovereignty; and on either side were ranged some of those palatial residences, which mark by their magnificence, how nearly in wealth and splendour the nobility of England approaches the throne. From the spacious balcony, the sweet summer air brought in the perfume of flowers, and swept gratefully over his feverish face.

He had concluded the first month of his new existence—and what a month it had


been ! He had been fêted, flattered, and caressed. He could not misunderstand the expression of those languishing glances, shot from fair eyes, which had greeted him. "You may throw your handkerchief to what lady you please," said the fat rascal, Freeborn. "The Grand Turk in his seraglio, at Constantinople, is not more absolute than you are now in London. Only recollect, that when your handkerchief is once thrown, your privilege is lost for ever. Make the most of your liberty, my dear fellow; it is impossible that, with so many traps laid for you, you can keep it long."

He had been royally—and more than royally—profuse in his expenditure. When he discovered that no demand would be made on his purse for household expenses, the revenue for such purposes having been carefully provided, he considered how he should be able to spend the wealth at his disposal. Conceiving, in a laudable spirit, that charitable institutions had the first claim on him, he had spent an hour in writing out cheques for those which had been most dexterously brought to his notice. In a single day, the most liberal of the liberal saw their good deeds eclipsed by the beneficence

of this young stranger. Prudent men reckoned up the sums which, from published lists, it was certain that he had given in donations, and marvelled what must be the amount of that wealth which could thus throw abroad superfluous thousands as ordinary men give away their loose change. There was something of childish delight in the feeling with which Florian marked this wonder. He had no notion before how easy it was to get rid of immense sums of money. The whole art he found consisted in being good-natured, and complying with every request made to him. All those ingenious people, who, in a great metropolis, minister to art and luxury, clustered round him as thickly as flies round a sugar-pot, and none of them (for he was not made of the stuff which can resist importunate flattery) went away unsatisfied.

As a natural result, he became very popular. There is no varnish like wealth to set off a man. He was elected—of course on payment of the fees—a fellow of he knew not how many learned societies. Though not prone to moralize, this led him to reflect a little. The benefactor of his youth—a man of rare and curious learning—had known, in

the seclusion of his rural parsonage, but one object of ambition. He desired that the letters F.R.S. might be tacked to his name, as a proof—perhaps to his neighbours, for the most humble love to be distinguished in the eyes that see them daily—perhaps for satisfaction to himself, for he was diffident of his own deserts—that his labours had not been in vain. With this view he had reverentially sent to the learned body—more to him than a congress of kings—communications rich with the fruit of years of studious thought. But his name was unknown, his papers were neglected, or opened only to be pilfered of their treasures; and he died without the distinction of the only earthly honour he coveted. “How happy,” thought Tremore, “would any of these distinctions have made him—but for all I care for them, they might as well be lavished on the figure of that satyr there! Well! it is at all events something to know that I am as good as any of the great personages I meet.” It was not without reason that he assumed this tone; for he had been complimented as a prodigy of learning, on account of some knowledge of the ancient Oriental languages he had acquired from his venerable preceptor.



Finding himself obeyed, as the representative of Cavendish, in all things without control, he soon acquired that air of authority and command which are born almost simultaneously with a consciousness of power. Freeborn was perfectly astonished at receiving, in the second week of his companionship, an intimation that his constant attendance could be dispensed with. He immediately decided that some one must have put his friend up "to that dodge," as he termed it, and his suspicions fell, and not without reason, on the Glarvales. The viscount took an early opportunity of introducing his accomplished young friend to her ladyship, of whose abilities he was justly proud. In her first interview with Florian, she managed to acquire his confidence; she treasured up every word he said, and subsequently quoted him to himself with such a show of deference, and took so much interest in all he said and did, that, as was quite natural, he thought her one of the most agreeable ladies to whom his good fortune had introduced him.


She took occasion to hint to him one day, in a very confidential manner, that people were beginning to notice the presence of that Freeborn at his side so constantly. "You

must know," she said blandly, "how soon the slightest peculiarity is observed in any person so distinguished as yourself. You might employ him to execute your commissions; but do you think you are quite right in making him your companion? I have heard gentlemen say that his habits were—scampish, I think, is the word they used. Pray, forgive me the hint."

Florian felt extremely obliged to Lady Glarvale for her caution. "The fellow has been very civil, and even useful, to me," he said; "but his tastes are so foreign to my own, that you may be assured I shall never think of making a companion of him."

Lady Glarvale was rejoiced to hear this; for his society might unpleasantly interfere with the brilliant career opening to Mr. Tremore. "I think," she continued, "that you can scarcely be aware he boasts every where he can do what he pleases with you—'make you dance to any tune he chooses to pipe,' I have heard, were his exact words; but I can scarcely think he would go so far as that."

"Oh!" exclaimed Tremore, concealing his chagrin under a gay air, "I am no



stranger to the dog's impertinence; but I dare say I shall be able, in his own language, to take him down a peg before he's many hours older."

That same noon, Freeborn was, as usual, arranging the evening's amusements:—

"We must go to Covent Garden to hear Viardot in a new character; then, as the nights are so horribly hot now, we'll drive over to your Versailles, and see how the groves, and the fountains, and the hayfields look by moonlight. I've arranged a capital supper there, and Freshman, Keenpoint, and a few fellows of that set, have promised to join us."

"I am much obliged to you for your trouble," Tremore said carelessly; "I mean to hear Lind to-night, and I'll thank you to go at once and secure me a stall, as the Glarvales have my box."

This was delivered so coolly, that Freeborn did not dare to remonstrate; but putting this and that together, as he said, knowing that the box had not been disposed of when he breakfasted with Tremore—he had no difficulty in determining from whose quiver the shaft must have come that had so galled him. The supper was countermanded,

and the presence of Freeborn's choice spirits dispensed with; but the evening was not lost. He employed it in penning a sketch of the poor peer as "an Irish stag," in which all the peculiarities of his lordship, including his Capel court practices, his meanness, his poverty, and his ill luck, were portrayed so faithfully, but in so bitter a view, that when the verses were dispersed the next morning, the fidelity of the protraiture was instantly recognised, and the name affixed to his lordship's back—for it is always at the back of people that these pleasant games are carried on—as securely as if it were branded there by a redhot iron. The intercourse of Tremore and Freeborn was not quite so cordial after this, our young hero going so far as to express dislike to cigars being smoked in his presence (the truth is, Lady Glarvale, while leaning on his arm, had insinuated in her politest manner, knowing he never smoked himself, that she could not think where he could have been to smell so vilely of that nasty tobacco); but further than that the rupture did not go. Tremore was too much afraid of his Falstaff, as he styled him to the Glarvales, to provoke a rupture. Freeborn knowing, in his own

phrase, "which side his bread was buttered," resolved to let nothing deprive his friend and Cavendish of the invaluable benefit of his experience. It even seemed likely that they would now get on better than before; as Freeborn dropped his air of Mentorship, and contentedly resigned himself to fulfil inferior but more useful duties.

In another respect, Florian's review of the month was not very satisfactory. He had promised that Mr. Dudley should be the new member for Littlewit, though he extremely disliked his manner, and could not understand, on reflection, how it was that a promise in his favour had been obtained from him, though it was certain that that promise was acted on by all parties concerned as decisive of the election. For Bellstar, on the other hand, he felt a degree of regard which increased with every interview. Perfectly disinterested himself, and of a disposition which no experience could cloud with distrust, that most elegant and amiable of idlers conceived himself to be under the deepest obligation to Tremore for his intentions in his favour. In declining his proposal, he earnestly expressed the gratitude with which he had received it, and only regretted

that the difference in their political opinions made it impossible for him to avail himself of his friend's generous good-will.

Men of the world—men, that is, whose principle is selfishness, and whose policy is deceit—pride themselves on their *management*, and it must be confessed with good reason. What puppets are the young and ingenuous in their hands! They make them act what parts they please, their sincerity and their virtue only aiding the designs of the cunning greybeards, who, with unseen hand, pull the wires which move them. It is to be hoped, for the happiness of the brute creation, that they are as blind in this respect as men; then the mill-horse must believe that the round in which he moves is reserved for his exercise and recreation; and the ox, that he is fattened from a sentiment of affection. Tremore, from first to last, had no more to do with the choice of the member for Littlewit (though he fully believed he had had his own way throughout) than a constitutional monarch has to do with the election of a cabinet, or with the appointment of the lord who “waits” behind the royal chair.

It was not any thought of this kind, how-

ever, which flushed his cheek, and quickened his pulses. A new and delightful sensation, which he cared not to scan too anxiously, began to agitate his heart. In the retirement in which he had been brought up, he had cherished the thought of love in his breast, as a delightful vision of which he might one day prove the reality. It was to him the pure sentiment which poets have described—the ideal rapture which forms a heaven of its own, and is content with the bliss it imagines. The young girls he had met on his first arrival in London, had inspired him with a tender interest; but neither possessed qualities to fire his imagination and inflame his blood. That vision of beauty which caught his eye at the Chiswick gates, had first disturbed his serenity, and, connected as it was with the marvellous change in his condition, had made an impression on his mind not to be easily effaced. Then a crowd of fair faces, all solicitous of his notice, moved in dazzling confusion before his eye; and amidst them, superior as the reigning planet to the host of heaven, shone the rare loveliness of Miss Laneton, which enchanted him the more from the indescribable attraction of her man-

ner—so innocent, so winning, so kind, but yet so unfathomable.

In one of the magic tales of Tieck, he tells how, above the foam of a golden goblet, there rose to the ardent gaze of an admiring youth the beautiful head of a lady he had once momentarily seen. But imagination requires no fairy goblet to raise such visions. When Florian attempted to read, dizziness came before his eyes, and a veil over the page; and from the mist broke forth by turns, or together, those heads which had most strongly captivated his fancy. And how lovely they appeared to him apart or in union! One so riant and animated in its expression, with the mirthful eyes flashing playful intellect; and the dimpled mouth, on which sat good-humour, and just so much of sarcastic thought as became its sportful humour; and the loose tresses, which seemed to rejoice in their freedom, and to diffuse glee through the air, as they danced with the sallies of a joyous mood. While the other—so pensive in its aspect, that the gleaming lustre of the hair shone like a glory round a saintly head—would have seemed too pure for any other feeling than adoration, but for the bright smile which, spread-

ing from the ripe lips, irradiated the whole countenance, and, raising the long fringes of her lids, gave to view eyes, which seemed to woo love by their soft and gleaming gentleness. These faces, which in the bustle of the day and the throng of amusement were little seen, almost banished sleep from his pillow, and in his disturbed slumber appeared to him a thousand times more charming than when he met them in reality. He was startled by a restlessness so new to him; when he complained of it, Freeborn recommended a gentle opiate; but the physical lassitude thus produced, only gave to his fancy a more delirious activity, as if that became quickened by the enforced repose of the body. So, plunging more ardently into the pleasures which courted him, he endeavoured to banish the thoughts which, in spite of himself, these sensations prompted, and to live each day as if there were to be no morrow.

CHAPTER III.

And if she mingled with the festive train,
It was but as some solitary star
Beholds the dance of shepherds on the plain,
In its bright stillness present, though afar.
Yet would she smile—and that too hath its smile,
Circled with joy which reach'd her not the while ;
And bearing a lone spirit not at war
With earthly things, but o'er their form and hue
Shedding too clear a light, too sorrowfully true.

MRS. HEMANS.

WHILE trifling with the delicacies on his breakfast-table a letter was brought to him; and, from the bordered envelope and fine hand, it was evident at a glance that it came from a lady. He lingered over the direction for some moments, and inspected the seal, a pretty device, with the initials U. L. in the centre. U. L. ! who could it be from? Una Laneton? He rejected the supposition as absurd; yet it was with a hand trembling with impatience that he tore open the envelope and read—


“Miss Laneton hopes that Mr. Tremore will excuse the great liberty she takes, in requesting him to favour her with a few minutes’ conversation—and to-day, if possible. She will wait at home until five, in the hope of seeing him. Should it not be convenient for Mr. Tremore to call to-day, will he be so good as to state at what hour Miss Laneton may expect him to-morrow?—St. James’s Square, Tuesday morning.”

Tremore, though not much acquainted with the usages of the world, could not help thinking that this was rather an unusual step for a young lady to take. But Una was a strange girl—strange in the mingled shyness and openness of her disposition—strange in the perfect innocence and purity, which rendered her unsuspicious of guile and wrong, and almost unconscious of their existence—and strange in the artlessness of her conduct and manners. Accustomed to have her own way, she was often led to act differently from other people, as she had little acquaintance with their standard of propriety.

I entreat the reader to recollect, that I am not setting up this character as a model of excellence. I am but describing it. The “heavenly Una” of Spenser, and the maiden

sung by Moore, whose only guard in her wanderings round the Emerald Isle was her chastity, would run greater hazard in modern times than they incurred in the days of knight-errantry. Yet, even now, vice may be disarmed by the very defencelessness of innocence, as angry weapons droop at the sight of a naked breast, which would remorselessly cleave through shield and cuirass. It may be that the Principle, which, aware of the world's iniquities, and informed of its lures, is fortified at all points against them, is safer than the Innocence, which is so ready to trust and believe from knowing nothing of deceit, and which is so free and fearless from thinking no evil, and imagining no danger. But for the sense of beauty, who does not prefer the smiling landscape, reposing in peaceful serenity, undreading and unguarded, to the view of sullen walls and frowning towers?

The few lines of that note vividly excited the quick fancy of the young scholar. Why should Miss Laneton wish to see him so particularly? Could it be that she was instigated by her father, who, like all others, was deceived by his show of wealth, and of whose mercenary character he had heard so



much? He had frequently met her since their acquaintance commenced; and, as her father had usually some business to transact when they came together, they fell, during their brief interviews, into that confidential intercourse which does more to ripen intimacy in a day, than careless conversation in mixed societies may effect in a year. The few lines he held were the first, however, he had ever seen from her hand; and he gazed on them as if the characters, by long scrutiny, might reveal some hidden meaning, and speak another language than that which they at first conveyed to his eye.

He prepared himself with more than usual care for the interview. He was not naturally vain; the studious habits of his early years had prevented the growth of any such folly in his breast; but he could not be unconscious of the attractions of the form which the mirror presented to his sight. On his arrival in St. James's Square, he was told that Miss Laneton was expecting him. She was seated at a table covered with papers, which the slightest glance at their formal writing and bulky shape showed to be from a lawyer's office. She received him with a grateful smile; and as those moist loving

eyes met his own, and the colour, which came to her cheek with the slightest emotion, suffused her face, he thought he had never seen her look more lovely. She did not allow him much time for reflection, nor did she wait to apologise for the step she had taken, but plunged at once into the business on which she needed his assistance.


"Do you know any thing of law, Mr. Tremore?" she asked. "I have been pouring over these papers until my eyes ache; and even now, I am not sure I have gathered their true sense."

Tremore replied that his studies had lain in quite a different direction, and that he feared Miss Laneton could not possibly have a worse adviser on any legal question.

"That is of no great consequence," she rejoined, "as I dare say you will take my word on the contents of these papers. They secure to me a considerable income when I am of age, and I am told I shall have a large sum besides from the accumulation of arrears."

"And does this thought make you melancholy?" asked Tremore gently, for he observed tears gathering in her dewy eyes.

"This fortune," she replied sadly, "was



my mother's, and it always pains me to think I never knew her."

"Nor did I know mine," said the scholar. I lost my father, too, at an early age, but missed him less for the kind guardian I found in his place."

"You were fortunate. It is very dreadful to meet with harshness where we look for love. Do you think our affections are in our own power?"

"Not altogether"—and here Florian drew from the pure fountain of his early teaching. "But God has so ordered it, that always our affection shall be drawn forth by what is most worthy of it. There must be something very unamiable in that person whom we wish to love, and yet cannot."

"It has been a great calamity to me," she returned, "that I never knew a mother's tenderness. My father is very indulgent; but he cannot conceive that I am different from the child he used to play with on his knee, and I am always afraid to undeceive him. That is one reason why I wish to consult you. You will not mention to any one what I am about to say to you?"

"You may depend on my silence."

"I want to borrow five or six thousand

pounds at once. I shall be of age in two years, and I would then repay the sum with good interest."

Tremore, who was not prepared for any disclosure of this kind, hesitated what reply he should make, for he felt his position singular. At length he said—

"It is a large sum. Have you not mentioned your wish at all to Mr. Laneton?"

"No; he never consults me on any business of his."

"Perhaps he might think," Tremore returned, smiling, "that you could not understand his business, even had he any idea that you would take an interest in it."

"And I think," she rejoined gravely, "that he could not understand mine."

"Is it so complicated, then? Mr. Laneton has a great reputation for sagacity."

"What I mean," she said, "is, that he could not enter into my motives any more than I can understand his. I dare say he might disapprove the purpose for which I want this money; but I should not be convinced by all he could say to dissuade me. Of what use is wealth if we cannot gratify ourselves by its disposal?"

"May I ask what occasion you have for

this money?" Tremore enquired, perplexed by his fear of compromising himself in any difference between Una and her father.

"I do not mind telling *you*," she answered. "A person for whom I feel sincere regard is arrested for debt—can you conceive any thing more shocking? If I get this money I can set him free; do you not think I shall be right to raise it for such a purpose?"

Florian's curiosity was excited, and he asked—

"Have I ever seen this gentleman? Whatever his misfortunes may be, he is happy in having Miss Laneton to compassionate them."

"You have not only seen him," she answered, "but you know him well. I have no authority to disclose his name, but it will be safe with you?"

"Most certainly. Surely you cannot mean Freeborn?"

"No!" she said, with a gesture of surprise at the supposition. "A very different person—Godfrey Bellstar."

"Mr. Bellstar!" exclaimed Tremore in an accent of astonishment. "I should never have imagined that. And it is for him that you wish to raise this money?"

Miss Laneton looked down in some confusion at this pointed question, but she answered steadily—

“Yes.”

Tremore was good-natured ; he felt pained at Bellstar's distress. When he first saw him, he had imagined him placed at the very pinnacle of human felicity, and afterwards he had admired him for his amiability and rare accomplishments. Between them there had grown up a feeling akin to friendship. Bellstar possessed, in an eminent degree, those qualities which inspire esteem and regard, even when they tempt neglect, or worse, from their liability to imposition ; and, as he possessed the most generous heart in the world in estimating the merit of others, he had formed the most flattering opinion of the excellence of Tremore's disposition. But at this moment a sentiment of jealousy, of which he had himself an uneasy consciousness, overcame Florian's better feelings, and he observed gravely—

“Are you not afraid, Miss Laneton, that the motives which prompt you to interfere in his favour may be misunderstood ?”

“And what if they are ?” she asked, composedly. “Do you think the opinion of

people we care nothing about, should prevent us from doing what we feel to be right?"

"No," he said; "but such an unusual interest—excuse me—might not Mr. Bellstar"—here he hesitated, as much embarrassed by the perfect calmness of Miss Laneton's manner, as by the difficulty he felt in delicately suggesting the caution he intended.

"I never meant Mr. Bellstar should know of my interference," she said, replying to his thought. "I wished you to act for me—if you would be so good; and then, as you would not misunderstand me, I should care for nothing else. I like Mr. Bellstar very much; but I am chiefly anxious for him on account of his connection with a friend of mine. If I could aid in his release, that would be a joyful surprise to *her*."

Tremore admired the delicacy with which this explanation was given, and begged for further particulars, that he might consider how best he could serve his friend, and carry Miss Laneton's wishes into effect. He said, at the same time, how much interested he felt in Bellstar himself.

"Justice," she said, "has not been done to his character, even by those who knew

him. He has a higher spirit and finer talents than are suspected."

"Most persons who speak of him," Tremore observed, "regret that his abilities are not turned to better account. He is reproached with trifling away his talents."

"That is not true!" Una returned. "You must have seen some of those beautiful sculptures attributed to an Italian artist. They are all the work of Bellstar. By their sale he has lately supported himself. This I learnt by accident. I am sure you will not betray my confidence."

This disclosure at once explained to Tremore what had previously appeared unintelligible to him. He now understood the sneers cast at those works by Dudley in Bellstar's presence; and could better appreciate the admirable temper with which the latter had borne those insulting gibes. When Una questioned him on his silence, he candidly told her what was passing in his mind, and expressed his conviction, that Dudley had by some means discovered the secret, but concealed it, that he might gall the true artist more effectually by depreciating his works.

"I have quite a dread of that Dudley,"

Miss Laneton said. "I was surprised when I heard you had preferred him to Bellstar for the representation of your borough. But I suppose, in such cases private friendship must give way to political connection."

Tremore, colouring deeply, accepted this interpretation of his conduct, and then, turning the conversation again to his friend's difficulties, he begged, with graceful good-nature, that Miss Laneton would leave the whole matter in his hands. He had a few thousands to spare, he said, which he could not lay out more to his satisfaction than in clearing Mr. Bellstar from his embarrassments. Speaking as if his fortune were as ample as report represented it, he declined to entertain the question of repayment at that time; and having received the address of the solicitor he was to apply to—Mr. Stone, of Thieves' Inn—he promised to see him at once, and to take measures for the instant release of the prisoner.

Una thanked him with her smiles—grave, yet bright—rather than with words; while he, trembling with emotion at her kindness, expressed the pleasure he felt in being able to gratify her wish. Perhaps she thought he

might count too much on what had passed, for at parting she spoke some serious words.

"Were I not so friendless as I am," she said, "I should not have ventured to make this request to you. Mine must be a sad life, but it need not be devoid of kindness and esteem." She spoke with a dejected air, and veiled her eyes as if to hide her emotion; then added, "But I must not weary you with my complaints. See this Mr. Stone. I should have gone to him myself had I not thought of you. I shall be very much pleased to see Mr. Bellstar at liberty. Perhaps, when I can act more independently, I shall be less dissatisfied, from feeling that I am of some use in the world. I shall be impatient to know how you succeed."

Florian left her, musing on the strange decree of fortune, which had endowed her with its choicest gifts—beauty, sensibility, and wealth—only to leave a void in her heart, which it seemed that nothing could supply.

CHAPTER IV.

For he was school'd by kinde in all the skill
Of close conveyance, and each practise ill
Of cosinage and cleanly knaverie,
Which oft maintain'd his master's braverie.

SPENSER.

TREMORE looked at his watch as he entered his carriage, and, seeing it was past six, thought it useless to call on Mr. Stone so late. The next day he gave a *fête champêtre* at his villa, and the morning following that, he was so fatigued and languid that he did not arrive at Thieves' Inn until the middle of the day. The property in this inn was held by a little snug corporation, of which Mr. Stone was an "ancient"—the "oldest ancient," the porters reverently styled him—which meant that he was the head of the corporation, and had the chief voice in the direction of its affairs. When Mr. Tremore was announced—the GREAT Mr. Tremore, as Stone informed one of his hope-

ful sons—the worthy ancient was ready to fall down in adoration of his visiter. He would have dusted his shoes with pleasure; but as the scholar prevented this, he carefully wiped with his white handkerchief the chair in which he begged him to be seated, and shouted out to his clerks that he was on no account to be disturbed, whoever might wish to see him.

He had a very emphatic way of expressing himself, frequently repeating the last words of a sentence to make the greater impression on his auditors, and often interlarding his discourse with homely images and allusions. When he had closed the door, he energetically scoured his face with his hands for some moments, and then violently winked his eyes, as if he was determined to come quite fresh and broad awake to whatever business might be opened. He shook his head when Bellstar's name was mentioned with benevolent compassion.

“A great pity, Sir—a great pity, indeed! No one can tell how grieved I am on account of that young man—how very very grieved I am! I have known his family for many years—almost since I was a boy, Sir—since I was a boy. With his fine talents, too—but an idler;

and such a spendthrift! Ah! such a spendthrift! Light got; light go. There's the mischief! Living at the rate he has been, when not worth a shilling. A sad case—a sad case! What is to become of his poor creditors—deceived tradesmen and broken-hearted money-lenders? there's the rub, Sir! —broken-hearted money-lenders—there's the rub!”

Good Mr. Stone was so pathetic on the misfortune of these creditors, that Tremore interposed, saying, he understood that the debts of his friend amounted to only about five thousand pounds.

“Five thousand pounds, my dear Mr. Tremore! Ah! how sad it is, that when gentlemen fall into difficulties they should never be able to tell the truth! How sad it is! The three *d's*—difficulties, debts, and duns, drown a man's sense of honour—literally drown it. His debts amount to twenty times the sum you name—to twenty times the sum at least. Mr. Smith has been here on his account—John Smith, I dare say you know him—and we have gone through the whole case. Not a hundred thousand pounds would clear him—not a hundred thousand pounds!”

"Surely!" exclaimed Tremore, "I cannot have been so greatly misinformed. I was told that about five thousand pounds would be sufficient to set him free, and I came prepared to pay you that sum immediately."

Mr. Stone on hearing this was divided in his sentiments, much as we may suppose an Israelite of old was when he worshipped the golden calf. He saw in his visiter a representative of the wealth which engaged all his thoughts and affections, and as such he venerated him; but, inasmuch as he appeared naturally to be only the type of a very silly animal, he could not help feeling for him a kind of contempt. Here, he thought, is a young gentleman mixing in the world, prepared to pay down five thousand pounds for the benefit of a beggar—literally a beggar (for Mr. Stone thought with the same emphasis that he spoke)—a fellow he knows next to nothing of, and from whom he will never get a shilling back! Ah! how enormously rich he must be, and how very soft—how very, very soft!

"Really, now!" he said, in answer to Tremore's offer, "this is generous—most generous. Ah! Mr. Tremore, if this unfortunate young man had always kept the society

of gentleman like yourself, he might have been in a very different situation now—a very different situation, indeed. If he had attended to the advice of his real friends—such friends as Mr. Laneton—a wonderful man, Sir—a wonderful man—and I will even say of myself, he might have been Prime Minister by this time, or Lord Chancellor—actually Lord Chancellor, sitting on the woolsack instead of being lodged in a jail. Five thousand pounds—but I will give you the exact amount; nothing like exactitude in these cases—five thousand one hundred and seventy-four pounds, is the sum for which Mr. Lazarus has obtained judgment on bills held by him. The costs are two hundred and thirty-two pounds sixteen shillings and fourpence more; together, five thousand four hundred and six pounds sixteen shillings and fourpence; the payment of that sum will free Mr. Bellstar—will free him, Sir, from confinement. But, as an honest man, I am bound to tell you the relief will be but temporary—merely out of the frying-pan into the fire; other creditors will come in, and his next detention will most likely be for a very much larger sum—for a very much larger sum, Mr. Tremore.”

"At all events," Tremore said, taking out his cheque-book, "I will settle this demand. I suppose, if I give you a cheque you will see all the necessary steps taken?"

At the sight of the cheque-book, the eyes of the respected ancient of the honourable society of Thieves' Inn glistened. He had a few weaknesses; one of them, as he said himself, was his humanity—another, was his eagerness to grasp at cash whenever it was offered him. For this last feeling, he had often been reproved by Mr. Laneton. "You disconcert my plans," said the capitalist to him, "by taking money when I want something better. Leave me to take care of myself. I am always sure of my security. When I place matters in your hands, I do not want partial settlements. Do you understand me, Sir? I want the law to take its course. Never receive instalments on my account, if you can help it. They loosen my hold on securities, and delay affairs which I wish finished." Bearing this command in mind, Mr. Stone looked wistfully at the cheque which Tremore had spread before him, longing to see it filled up and safe in his own hands, yet aware that it was his part to suggest pretences for delay. The prin-

ciple of duty, as he said to himself, at last triumphed, though not without a severe internal struggle. He wrested his eyes from the tempting paper, and, with an air of honest kindness, remonstrated against the generous act Tremore was about to perform.

“Consider, my dear Sir—consider what you are about to do. You really must look before you leap—you must, indeed. This money will do Bellstar no good. He is an inconsiderate person—inconsiderate to an extraordinary degree. I have often reasoned with him myself, when his difficulties were thickening about him. I begged him to consider, and to retrench in time. ‘My good young friend,’ I said to him, ‘as you see you cannot continue to wear gold breeches, why not be content with brass ones—with good serviceable brass ones? Take my advice now—a stitch in time saves nine!’ All of no avail, Sir—of no avail whatever. Of course, I should be very happy to see my client paid; Lazarus wants his money, poor fellow! but I cannot—I cannot in justice to my principles, and having regard to my honest name—I cannot allow you to pay this money; for it will be lost money to you, Sir—as absolutely lost as though sunk in the

sea; paying these bills will be only pouring water in a sieve—nothing else. I cannot allow you to do it without telling you, that it will be of no service whatever to your friend—of less than no service to him, as it may prevent that settlement of his concerns which it is his duty to effect without delay—without a moment's delay."

Tremore, with the signed cheque in his hand, wavered. He ought not, he thought, to fly in the face of this good man's well-intended remonstrance; yet, remembering his promise to Una, he felt reluctant to leave without securing Bellstar's release. At any rate, he conceived there could be no harm in a little delay, and he suggested, therefore, that the matter should stand over until the next morning; a suggestion which the excellent ancient of Thieves' Inn embraced the more readily, as it would enable him to gain his client's opinion in the mean time. But, just as this postponement was settled, hasty footsteps were heard on the stairs, and the next moment the door-handle of Mr. Stone's sanctum was shaken, in spite of the urgent attempts of his clerks to prevent the profanation. With an air of ruffled dignity, Mr. Stone advanced to reprove the intruders, but

drew back with an exclamation of surprise as the door opened, and Bellstar and Mr. John Smith entered the room.

For a few moments—a very few moments—Mr. Stone was discomposed; but, recovering his self-possession while the new-comers exchanged greeting with Tremore, he affected to be most agreeably surprised by the unexpected appearance of his esteemed dear young friend, accompanied by a gentleman of such approved discretion as Mr. John Smith.


Bellstar, who, at all times and in all situations, preserved his easy elegance of demeanour, received the advances of Mr. Stone with polite coldness.

“As you happen to be engaged against me in this case, Mr. Stone,” he said, “and as the proceedings which consigned me to a jail were instituted by you, it is better you should for the present forget those friendly sentiments you are still so kind as to entertain for me. Allow me now to treat you simply as the attorney of Messrs. Lazarus and Laneton—two gentlemen at whose hands, I see clearly, I have little forbearance to expect.”

“As you please, Sir,” replied Stone, not at all disconcerted. “As you please. This

is not the first time I have been suspected by persons I was most desirous to serve. My character will bear a little rubbing, I hope. The more it is scoured, the brighter it will look, I flatter myself. To many persons I should say no more—not a word more; but I must not allow you to remain under erroneous impressions, Mr. Bellstar; I must not in justice to your friends—in justice to yourself. There is a good deal to be cleared up as to the motives which led to your little temporary confinement. We will say nothing on that point just at present; but I may say, and I will say, Sir, that at the moment when you entered the room, Mr. Tremore was consulting me on the readiest and safest plan of getting you clear of *all* your difficulties, Mr. Bellstar. What we wished to effect was, not a patchwork settlement, but a solid lasting clearance, which would set you firmly on your legs; and I must add, that in all my life I never knew any thing equal to the liberality of Mr. Tremore on this occasion—never! It was munificent—perfectly munificent. He was on the point of handing me a cheque for the amount of the detainers lodged against you, when you interrupted us.”

By this speech, the acute Mr. Stone



reckoned he should so far gain over Tremore as to prevent him from disclosing what had really passed; nor was he deceived. Our hero blushed at the compliment paid him, and suffered Bellstar to take the cheque from his hand, look at the amount, and tear it into fragments.

"I am glad," he said "that by my arrival I prevented this too generous action on your part. My friend Smith here has released me, and I have placed myself entirely in his hands. But my obligation to *you*," he added impressively, "is as great as though your intention had been consummated."

"I was a great deal more cautious than you would have been, it seems," said Smith, addressing Tremore. "Before I parted with a shilling, I made this gentleman execute a trust, giving me possession of all his property of every description, and luckily he has a little on which neither mortgage nor bill of sale has yet fastened. Here he is free, but worth not a stick save what he stands upright in."

"He could not have done better, Sir!" exclaimed Stone, willing to put the best face he could on a transaction which mortified him to the quick.

"Well, I don't think he could!" Smith answered. "Damer induced me to interfere, and, in fact, arranged every thing between us. He must now set to work at once, and sell every thing that can be sold to moderate advantage. After what I have just learnt, by-the-by, about Mr. Tremore's disposition to serve you, Bellstar, I shall insist on his name being joined with mine, if he has no objection, that is. We shall be stronger together; don't you think so, Stone?"

"As a professional man," replied Stone, in his honestest tone, "I should say Mr. Tremore ought to consult his legal adviser before assenting to the proposal. As a friend to all parties, I might speak differently; but as a lawyer—only as a lawyer, mind—I must say such engagements ought not to be entered into without the fullest consideration."

"Quite right, Stone!" said Smith. "I took the opinion of my lawyers before I concluded anything; and not only that, but took care to assure myself that I was pretty safe before I advanced a shilling, and Tremore must do the same. Now, come along, Bellstar. Tremore, will you go with us? I shall

only be just in time to see how my colts sell at Tattersall's. There are two or three I should like you to have, as I know they'll turn out splendid animals."

"Stone's a respectable fellow!" said Smith, as they left the place together. "But rather too fond of *making* business."

This was his real opinion of the worthy ancient of Thieves' Inn; and he knew him thoroughly. But Smith, in his own way, was rather fond of driving a hard bargain himself, and could therefore readily forgive the like disposition in another.

CHAPTER V.

Oui, le bonheur est facile
Au sein de la pauvreté ;
J'en atteste l'évangile,
J'en atteste ma gaieté.

BERANGER.

WHILE Florian is engaged in an uninterrupted succession of gaieties, divided in his fancies between Una and Geraldine, and seriously thinking of a visit to the villa of Lord Glarvale—notwithstanding the ill-natured sarcasms of Freeborn, slyly thrown in on every available opportunity—we will return for a while to the two poor sisters introduced to the reader at the commencement of this narrative, and relate their humble adventures in the period which has elapsed.

The arrival of Florian in London had cast a gleam of light over their path. They were so very simple that they experienced an indefinable feeling of comfort in the thought

of his protection. They magnified his learning and talents, not knowing how useless or how burdensome such qualities were in the commerce of the world. They had anticipated the happiest effects from his interference; and besides, being so solitary and friendless in the midst of the mighty town, they were cheered by thinking that there was one person in it who cared for them, and they were enlivened by his occasional visits. But when he departed their spirits sunk a little, and they felt a more desolate sense of their loneliness. He had gained a place in their affections, which now, left void, gave them that worst of all sensations—the heart-ache.

The sick girl, Millicent, spoke of him least; her spirit was too high for complaint, but her dark lashes drooped on her cheek, and her thin pale fingers trembled over her work when his name was mentioned. Her agitation was not hidden from the watchful eyes of Griselda; she knew there was more in her sister's nature than she understood—a depth of feeling—a strength of will—a warmth of imagination—which, under a kinder fate, might have blossomed, like her form, into luxuriant beauty. The humble, self-deny-

ing Griselda regarded her with that highest kind of human love, in which the care that cherishes is mingled with the devotion that admires. She loved her even better for her exactions ; for constant indulgence had made Millicent wilful ; and felt her affection constantly grow with her sacrifices ! Not, indeed, that she was conscious of any sacrifice ; for to her it seemed the most natural thing in the world, that she should give way in every thing to her sister—that she should comply with all her wishes, and respect even her caprices. What Millicent spoke was for Griselda a law. She had absolute faith in her sister's judgment, and trusted to it implicitly on all points.

The work which supplied the means for their poor maintenance was not all her toil. She had to wait on her sister, and attend to her infirmities—for Millicent was a great sufferer, and sometimes could not repress the cry of anguish which rose to her bloodless lips, as she lay propped up by pillows, like a sculpture of purest marble. Perhaps it was the very multiplicity of Griselda's cares, the constancy of her occupation (she had little time for thought, she left that to her sister), which contributed to her cheer-

fulness—perhaps it was the zeal of her love which supported her; for affection which demands so much, gives a strength equal—ay, superior—to what it requires. However it might be, she bore the long day's labours, and the night's watchfulness, not only without a murmur, but with unfailing health. Most true it is, that when “the mind's free the body's delicate;” and when, on the other hand, the mind is excited, when its energies are called forth, by duty, by principle, by love—by any of the higher incentives to exertion—then the body is gifted with supernatural strength, to fulfil the requirements of the spirit.

Griselda, when she noticed the emotion of her sister at the name of Florian, looked into her own heart to discover its cause. She found that he was dear to her too, but in what sense was more than she could tell. She was conscious that in his presence she had felt a new pleasure—that her heart seemed drawn towards him by an indefinable attraction; she regretted his departure, but it did not disturb her peace. On her sister, she saw, it weighed more heavily. This was not surprising, she thought; for Millicent always felt more deeply than she

did. He always paid most attention to Millicent, and perhaps she loved him. Oh! if she could but get restored to health; and, if fortune smiled on them, why might not Florian and Millicent be married? and then how blest she would be, to have him for a brother! This idea took possession of her mind. It seemed natural to her, that every one should admire and love her sister; and that she should love him in return, appeared no more strange. With the simplicity of her character, she recollected all the trivial accidents which, to her hopeful spirit, could seem to bode the events she desired. She had dreamt of a funeral but two nights ago, with a long train of mourning coaches—that was a sign of a splendid wedding; and a purse had popped from the fire to the very foot of Millicent's bed, while she toasted bread for her breakfast that morning.

Millicent laughed at her sister's fancies, but became more sad for them. She felt herself getting weaker, though she tried to conceal it; and from very weakness would, when Griselda was out, fall into a passion of long-restrained tears. She would not acknowledge to herself that she was pained by Florian's abrupt departure; but feeling it

stronger than reason, stronger than pride, she could not shut despondency from her heart, though she struggled to repress every outward sign of it.

For a few weeks their quiet life was undisturbed. They heard nothing from their attorney, Mr. Rock; and, after Griselda's last interview with him, they ceased to wish to hear from him.

"Justice will be done at last!" cried Millicent firmly, "though I may not live to see it. But we must bear our part in the work. Never speak to me of submission again, dear child. I have your rights to maintain as well as my own, and nothing shall ever induce me to yield the least part of them."

Griselda heard her sister with a sigh. Poor little soul! she was of so peaceful a temper, that had the interest at stake been a thousand times greater than it was, she would cheerfully have surrendered it all to obtain for her sister the comforts her sick state required. She said nothing, however, knowing that a word of opposition would throw her into convulsions; and so, while work was supplied her, she went on with her daily task from early till late, singing old melodies when colours and brushes and prints were

put away for the night, and finding her joy in the caress with which her sister greeted her when she rose from her work.

But a hard trial was prepared for them—harder than they had yet known. When Griselda took back a parcel of finished prints to the warehouse, she was told that no more work was ready for her. The subjects for the season were all out, and the trade supplied. It would be some weeks before any thing else was ready—they could not say when; she might call when she was passing, or, as they knew her address, they would send to her.

With a heavy heart the poor girl returned home. The little fund she had, she knew, must be all bespoke beforehand; for it was with difficulty they managed to eke out a scanty subsistence from her earnings, and she knew not where else to look for employment. Millicent trembled when she heard the sad tidings, but she soothed her sister with hopeful words; and, as she was an attentive reader of the Bible, she quoted text after text, each stronger than the other in assurance, that the Lord would never desert those who put their trust in him.

How multitudes of beings, as frail, friend-

less, and destitute as themselves, are supported when work fails them, and every source of subsistence seems cut off, is among the great and inscrutable mysteries of London life. No miracle replenishes their small barrel of meal and cruise of oil, yet they do not quite fail. In the last extremity, some chance—some seeming chance—brings them aid, and saves them from the famine which all but claimed them for its own. For many days the sisters struggled with sore distress. The round fair face of Griselda told of the ravages of hunger; bad as the Present was, each hour that passed brought them nearer to a worse Future.

It was late in the evening, and Griselda had lit a bit of a candle, carefully spared to perform some little offices for her sister. About to extinguish it, she clapped her hands with joy—

“See, Milly, if there is not a letter coming to us! I never saw a plainer one. Oh! I do hope it will bring good news.”

Millicent looked and smiled, and then kindly chid her sister for entertaining such silly notions; but nevertheless they both slept the better for the omen. What wonder if the poor—children of Providence, as they

were—knowing how little depends on themselves, how much on causes they cannot control or foresee—should suffer their hopes and fears to be a little moved even by the snuff of a candle! Affliction is always superstitious; and the trifles of domestic life are at least as likely to read us our destiny as the distant-shining stars.

Wonderful to relate, a letter did arrive the following morning, containing—they could scarcely believe their eyes—a bank-note for ten pounds, with these few words only—

“A stranger to the young women to whom this note is addressed, having accidentally heard of their deserving character and present distress, sends the enclosed for their relief. But they must not expect the gift to be repeated, and must continue to rely as formerly on their own exertions for support.”

How comparative is wealth! Had the sisters been informed at that moment that the fortune, for which they had struggled so long, was adjudged to them, they could scarcely have experienced a livelier joy. This sum would not only pay all they owed, but would leave enough to provide for several weeks; and meanwhile, a stock of Millicent’s

netting would be ready for sale—and Griselda would be sure to get more employment from the warehouse.

For a long time they tried to conjecture who could have sent them this money. The word “stranger” puzzled them most. What stranger was likely to interest himself in their concerns? They could make nothing of it. Neither mentioned the name of Florian, but each was firmly convinced that he was in some way instrumental in their relief.

CHAPTER VI.

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollownesse,
That moves more deare compassion of the mind
Than beautie brought t' unworthie wretchednesse,
Through envie's snares, or fortune's freakes unkind.
I, whether lately through her brightnes blynd,
Or through allegiance and fast fealty,
Which I do owe unto all womankind,
Feele my hart perst with so great agony,
When such I see that all for pitty I could dy.

SPENSER.

GRISELDA now pursued her enquiries for work with fresh spirit; and one day she returned to her sister with the welcome news, that a stock of maps, which required very nice colouring—Griselda was skilful in her work—would be ready for her next week. While congratulating themselves on their good fortune, a shrill voice was heard calling on Griselda. She went to the head of the stairs, and received this message from a woman on the lower floor—

“There’s a gentleman to see you, Miss

Ashley, so I've told him to come up; and I'll trouble you to let him know that your's is the attic bell, that he mayn't bring me to the door when he comes again."

"How very strange!" exclaimed Millicent, as she went to prepare her sister. "A visiter—and I left the lid of the teapot open while I went for your roll this morning."

The visiter was no other than the respectable Mr. Rock. "As Miss Ashley," he said with a bow to Millicent, "was unable to come out, he had thought it right to call *himself* (he laid much stress on that word), that he might precisely inform her how matters stood in the great Ashley cause, and take her directions on the course to be pursued."

Mr. Rock, who had stood while he said this, now looked round for a chair. There were two in the room, but one was by the bedside, filled with Millicent's netting, and on the other some things were spread ready for her use. Griselda hastily cleared one for his use, and placed it near Millicent's head.

The pious lawyer mean time took a survey of the room. He had never seen them in that place before, and its abject poverty inspired him with great contempt for the girls who in-

habited it. It occurred to him as something absurd—quite a joke, in fact—that they should pretend to an estate of six or seven thousand a year at least—with *mesne* profits amounting to near a hundred thousand pounds, all safely invested in Three per Cent. Consols, and standing, as any one might see by searching the books, to the credit of the cause! And not only that; but to oppose Mr. Laneton, one of the greatest capitalists in the world, an M.P., who was invited to the minister's state dinners, and who kept an account at Glynn's, at the Bank of England, and at Coutts'!—Moreover, to act in direct opposition to the advice of their own solicitor—to fly in his face, though they owed him three thousand pounds and upward, part of it borrowed money too, it was unnatural, monstrous, shocking, impious—actually impious!

Nothing of this train of thought, however, appeared in his face. His fat cheeks were puffed out by his usual simper, and he softly rubbed his velvety hands with an air of the most placid benevolence. He bent forward over Millicent's bed, and poor dear'd and poor thing'd her with quite fatherly tenderness. The anger of Millicent was always raised by

this kind of pity. Slightly raising herself on her pillow, she waved her hand with the command of a queen, and said—

“I will thank you to move further off ; I shall still hear you quite plainly.”

Mr. Rock obeyed; but, as he did so, inwardly deplored her stubborn pride; and, though his piety prevented him from conceiving any feeling of resentment, he could not help regarding it as providential that he came on business which must humble her.

As for Griselda, she stood apart in anxious expectation, glad that the man of law was brought face to face with her sister, yet a little trembling the issue of the interview.

“Now, you may proceed, Sir,” said Millicent, when the little smirking attorney had edged his chair to the other extremity of their narrow room.

Mr. Rock thereupon commenced his well-considered discourse. He dwelt on the efforts he had made—the monies he had advanced—the points he had raised—the adverse decisions he had had to fight against. He feared that zeal for his young clients had already carried him too far, and protested that his conscience would not allow him to go further. The case must be given up. He

advised them, as their friend, to accept the liberal offers which had been made them. Their opponent—their real opponent—was a most worthy gentleman; they might safely trust to his generosity to do even more than he had offered. But if they again declined his conciliatory proposal, he (Mr. Rock) could not answer for the consequences; he feared to contemplate them; he would not shock his dear young friends by giving utterance to them.

Millicent listened calmly till he ceased, and then said—

“I always understood that the representatives of John Baptist Ashley were not our opponents—that they were a sham.”

“Excuse me,” he said, interrupting her, “sham is a hard word; let us say fiction, if you please—fiction. “*In fictione juris semper æquitas existit*,” which means, that equity is always at the bottom of fictions of the law.”

“The maxim might be nearer the truth,” she said, “if it stated that equity was one of the fictions of the law. You will now please to give me the name of my real opponent.”

“I can have no objection to do so; indeed, if you please, you can communicate with him,

though I earnestly advise you to do so through me, your solicitor. He is Mr. William Laneton, one of the most respected gentlemen, I can assure you, in the whole kingdom—a gentleman of the highest probity; of the greatest benevolence; of the purest character; and, my dear Miss Ashley, of the most extensive property.”

“What is his address?” again enquired Millicent.

Mr. Rock mentioned the number in St. James’s Square.

“Write that down, Griselda,” said Millicent.

Poor young women! thought Mr. Rock, they will communicate with him, I suppose. I hope they may. Mr. Laneton will then see how truly conscientious a part I have acted.

“I now understand,” resumed Millicent, “that you consider our case quite hopeless, and that you think the paltry consideration for which we are to renounce our rights is offered us out of pure charity.”

“What you once conceived were your rights,” softly suggested Mr. Rock.

“Be it so,” she replied. “What I now wish to know from you is, the part we are expected to bear in the subsequent proceed-

ings—what are we to do, to deserve Mr. Laneton's bounty? Something I perceive is expected from us—what is it?"

Mr. Rock did not like her manner, but he thought this looked like coming round; so, briskly rubbing his hands, he answered—

"Nothing is required from you, my dear young lady, absolutely nothing—but to refrain from useless and vexatious opposition. I should merely assure our opponents on your part, that we were willing to amicably co-operate in all steps to bring this protracted litigation to a close. When all the matters now before the court are settled, then it would be more satisfactory to take the case before the House of Lords, that after the decision of that supreme court of judicature, it may never be litigated again. *Interest reipublicæ ut sit finis litium.*"

"Then, after the decision of the House of Lords, if I understand you rightly, no discovery that might be made would be sufficient to open the question again? If, for instance, it were discovered that John Baptist Ashley really died in Germany, as my father was satisfied he did, years before our birth, that fact would not avail to restore to us our right?"

"As you have put the question to me thus plainly, I must tell you it would not. If the House of Lords, on presumption of A's death, adjudged his estates to B, then though A were to present himself in *propria personâ* before the House, it would still adhere to its recorded judgment, and declare him dead to all legal intents and purposes."

"Ah! I understand that perfectly; and now I will thank you to inform me what those dreadful consequences are, which you say we should have to apprehend, if we persist in defending our cause to the last."

"My dear young lady, I will speak to you as plainly on this point as the other, because I am sure you wish it. You are aware of the heavy bill of costs I have against you, to say nothing of the sums I have advanced from time to time. But I leave myself entirely out of the question. Zeal for your interests led me to raise every possible point in your favour; and, in some cases, the decision went against us with costs. You may be called on for payment of these costs at any time; and on your refusal to pay them you are adjudged guilty of contempt of court, and must remain in prison, without

possibility of release, till your contempt is purged."

Griselda, on hearing this, gave a faint shriek, but Millicent said sarcastically—

"Your zeal for my interest, then, Sir, has put me in danger of perpetual imprisonment, and that danger I can only escape by sacrificing my own rights and those of my sister. My case is truly a hard one! If we accept the pittance offered us, how is your bill and the other demands on us to be met?"

"I feel justified in assuring you," he replied, with more eagerness than was quite prudent, "that all costs, and the whole of your liabilities, will be honourably paid from the funds of the estate."

"And you advise us to accept this offer?"

"Most decidedly I do! I am in my conscience convinced that it is the best thing you can do."

"I, too, have a conscience," she answered proudly; "a conscience which encourages me to resist oppression, and bids me not risk the loss of Heaven's protection by ceasing to trust in it. Go, Sir, I understand you! You have betrayed and sold us; but we will not be parties to the iniquitous transactions."

As she spoke, her frail frame quivered with indignation, and Griselda, with tears in her eyes, hastened to support her.

"You will repent this, Miss Ashley," said the man of law, rubbing his hands, while his nose glowed like a furnace; "you will repent this indecent language, when the consequences I have warned you of fall on you, and, whatever may become of you now, will be in no respect chargeable on me. *I* have done my duty. My breast is clean; I can serve you no more, except by my prayers, and you shall still have those."

"This room is mine, Sir; leave it!" she cried in a tone of command.

"You will repent this conduct, I know—I hope your repentance will not come too late. 'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.'"

The humble Griselda lost all patience on perceiving the increasing agitation of her sister. The fury with which love arms the most timid to resist outrage inspired her. She caught the attorney by the arm, and dragged him to the door.

"Would you kill my sister?" she cried with vehemence. "Can you not see how ill she is? Have you no feeling for her dis-

treass? Go, and never insult her by your presence again!"

She thrust him from the door before he had recovered from his amazement; and then, as if he were a thief or a murderer, she drew the inside bolts, and, in a kind of frenzy, heaped every moveable article in the room against the door, to make it secure.

Strong convulsions seized on the frame of the sick girl as her excitement passed away. Her sister, though accustomed to these paroxysms, always regarded them with dread, and would have screamed for assistance had not Millicent by her gestures forbade her. As they subsided, Millicent motioned for the Bible; Griselda took it, and read the Psalm pointed out by the trembling finger of her sister.

"The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

"Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart; thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.

"To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress."

CHAPTER VII.

Peace settles where the intellect is weak,
And love is dutiful in thought and deed.

WORDSWORTH.

FOR the next day or two, the distress of Griselda was extreme. She refused to leave her sister alone even for a minute, lest she should be snatched away by ruffians in her absence. Every ring of the bell terrified her, and every step on the stairs made her run to the door to see that the fastenings were secure; for she was firmly persuaded that the law never permitted a door to be forced. Millicent was less alarmed, but she was pained by her sister's anxiety, and considered how she could best relieve it.

"What is the matter with you, child?" she said as Griselda, while preparing breakfast, impatiently stamped her foot on the floor.

"You will only laugh when I tell you,

Milly; my foot keeps tingling so, that I am sure I am going to tread fresh ground."

"That is very likely," said Millicent after a moment's pause; "for I propose that we should remove from here."

Griselda looked at her sister with astonishment.

"Remove from here! Oh, dearest Milly, I wish we could! If we could but manage to move secretly to some place where no one could find us, then I should indeed be happy."

"And why may we not? We have no farther business with that knavish attorney; and as for your work, you can take an omnibus to the warehouse, for I think of going four or five miles away. I daresay that we shall get a lodging cheaper, and what we save that way will nearly pay for your going to the city as often as is required."

Griselda clapped her hands with joy.

"Four or five miles!—why that will be quite in the country, and you will have better air, and see trees and gardens, and I shall be able to keep some flowers alive in your window. But oh, Milly!" and she hesitated a moment, as tears came into her eyes, "it will never do to move you. You

could not bear it. I would sooner a thousand times stay here than run the risk of your injuring yourself."

"I do not think a little motion would hurt me," returned the sick girl, "and I feel that any change would do me good now. I do not think I could stay here longer. I am weary of the place. It will be the death of me, if I do not move from it. The heat is too oppressive. Leave it I must and will, and the sooner now the better."

"How can you move, dearest Milly? You know what an effort it is for you to sit upright. And to think of going so far, too! No, let us give up all idea of it. What would become of me if the removal were to injure you?"

Griselda always spoke of herself as dependent on her sister, and protected by her cares, and made it appear that her devotion was partly due to a feeling of self-interest.

"I have considered every thing," Millicent replied. "You must get a roomy cab. I can lie in it on these pillows—they are our own. The man of the house is a porter; he can carry me down stairs. You must go this very morning to the southern part of London, Camberwell, and Dulwich, and that

way, and find a room that will suit us, and then we can move to-morrow. I shall feel better when I am settled. Does it not appear as if this money were sent us for the purpose? We could not have moved without it. Now there is nothing to detain us a day. Be quick, then; get on your bonnet and set off. We do not know how soon we may be interrupted if we delay."

Griselda knew that opposition would be vain, and besides she began to think hopefully of her sister's project, and to anticipate with delight a change which would give Millicent purer air, and free them from all fear of Mr. Rock carrying his threats into effect. But how could she leave her sister? Millicent had thought of that, too. The woman of the house had a little girl, who would stay in the room, and keep the door fast locked and bolted until her return. It was an important expedition for Griselda, and she had a hundred points to take Milly's opinion on, concerning the fittest kind of lodging, before she could resolve to depart. In Fleet-street she found an omnibus going to Camberwell. Soon after she had entered, an elderly man, with very white hair, thread-bare apparel, and gaiters, got in.

"Do you go all the way, Miss?" he asked; "for if so, you had better sit nearer the top here, where you can have the window open without feeling the draught."

Griselda replied she thought so, but she did not know where the omnibus stopped. He informed her at the Fox and Grapes, on the hill.

"And is that far from Dulwich?" she asked.

"About a mile and a half," he answered. "There is a pleasant walk across the fields. Do you know your way?"

She replied she did not; and then he told her he meant to walk that day, as he had come out for a little recreation, and thought of going to the picture gallery. He would be her guide with pleasure.

Griselda thought there could be no harm in trusting herself to a person so staid and venerable in appearance. She thought herself fortunate in having met with him; and more especially when, having heard from her that she had come out to look for a lodging, he told her he thought he could direct her to roads where she would be likely to meet with what she wanted. He was as good as his word; he took her to

some of those quiet green roads which stretch out on all sides from Camberwell; showed her several rows of small but decent dwellings, and waited while she made enquiries at those houses which exhibited a bill in the window. After a long search, she found a room which she thought would exactly suit. Its perfect cleanliness, after the smoke of London, seemed delightful to her. The woman—the honest wife of a mechanic—made some objection to receiving a sick person in her house; but this was overcome, when she heard that Griselda waited on her entirely herself. Perhaps the appearance of Griselda had some effect in inducing the good dame to waive her scruples. Her face was so winning in expression, and her air was so frank and innocent, as to excite the strongest prepossession in her favour; and then her clothes, though of the humblest materials, were so neatly and tastefully made—her sister often told her she could do any thing with her needle, even to winning hearts—and so modestly worn, that she had quite the appearance of a young lady in morning dress.

When the elderly gentleman found she was suited, he politely expressed the pleasure

he had felt in assisting her, and then cordially wished her good-morning. Griselda hastened home, and delighted Millicent with her description of the lodging she had found. They resolved to depart at an early hour the next morning, and Griselda sat up later than usual to get every thing packed that night.

Their arrangements the following day were soon made. The most important matter was to get Millicent up, and dress her. Supported by her high spirit, she suffered no complaint of fatigue, no murmur of pain, to pass her lips. She had one dress carefully preserved, which Griselda—it had been a labour of love to her—had altered and trimmed from time to time, as fashions varied, that Millicent might wear it the first time (how long that first time was coming!) that she sat up. Dressed in this, with her dark hair falling in masses of curl about her neck—it was the fashion of her early days—she looked exquisitely lovely, though too frail and fair for human beauty. The rough man who bore her down-stairs, touched her with the reverence due to a saint of heaven; and the woman put her apron to her eyes to wipe away her tears, as she saw her car-

ried from the threshold. When Millicent was in the cab, she put forth her hand to wish them good-by. The woman squeezed it heartily; but the man, letting it lie a moment in his rough horny palm, contemplated its delicacy with wonder; then brushing his lips with his sleeve, he imprinted on it a gentle kiss, as if he dared not venture to let even his lips press it too roughly. Griselda was about to join her sister, when the woman detained her to say good-by again—

“God bless you, Miss Grizzel, and your poor dear sister!—she looks like an angel if ever any one did; and, seeing what she suffers, no wonder she’s been cross-like to me now and agen. I hope the change ’ll do her good, as you say, though I’m afeard she’s not long for this world; and nobody shall never know where you’re gone to from me, nor nothing about you of no sort. Ah! my Jim says she felt as light as a feather when he took her up; but when she’s next carried out, says he, it’ll be by more bearers than one, for ’ll that!”

Griselda, scarcely repressing a cry of indignation, shrank from the woman with loathing; and, as she entered the cab, drew down the blind on that side to avoid her

face. Insult and wrong passed her by harmless; but a word, however well meant, which wounded her love and her hopes, that she could not forgive. Whoever doubted her sister's recovery, was for her a mortal enemy. Affection has its creeds and its mysteries as well as faith, and is ready to fight for them to the death. By its actions; if not by its lips, it confesses, *Credo, quia impossibile est.*

That evening the sisters were quietly housed in their new lodging. Griselda had arranged every thing to her sister's taste. The bed faced the window, and as Millicent rested on her pillow, she could see over the tops of waving trees the blue which tints the slope of distant hills. A china jar, filled with flowers, rested on the little table by her side, and the soft warm air of a July evening stole in delightfully through the open casement. The blackbird alone did not seem to like the change. He missed the roar of the street traffic; not all the coaxing of Griselda could get a note from him; he had been so long a denizen of the town that he regarded his removal from it as a kind of banishment, and ruffled his plumes as sulkily as a courtier in exile.

"Was I not right," said Millicent, with her hand affectionately embracing her sister's head, "in saying I should bear the removal better than you anticipated? I feel positively revived by it. I hope another time you will believe what I say."

"Dear Milly, you know you are always right. It is very naughty of me ever to oppose you; but when it is from anxiety for you, you must forgive me. I am glad we've moved now. What a comfort to think that no one can disturb us here!"

"Yes, and I have a plan in my head for frustrating the schemes of that vile lawyer. I am sure there are persons who would take up our cause, if they knew all the circumstances.

"Let us not care about it," Griselda replied; "if I can but get work, I shall be quite happy now."

Millicent tenderly kissed her sister.

"You sometimes say I do not love you enough," she said, for Griselda was exacting only in the assurances of affection she required; "if you could look into my breast, you would see how fondly and faithfully you are treasured there. I must guard this inheritance for you, and take care that it is


not forfeited through my neglect. One day, Griselda, when you are rich and happy—indeed, that day will come—you will acknowledge my care. That rascal Rock has betrayed us. We must try to find some one more honest. They would desire nothing better than to proceed as they please, without interruption from us. But I do not despair of defeating them yet. While you sleep, I lie often awake scheming and thinking, and all for your sake, dear one.”

Griselda was so soft-hearted, that she could never repress her tears when Millicent spoke despondingly of herself. Now she tried to cheer her sister, and re-assure herself by speaking confidently of the good that the purer air and freedom from society must do her.

“I am sure we ought never to despond again,” she said, “seeing how providentially we have been assisted. Such a load of uneasiness is taken off my mind that I shall go to rest to-night quite happy, and think of nothing but our good fortune in getting so cleverly out of the reach of that bad man.

Poor simple children! While they were congratulating themselves on their escape, Mr. Rock was thinking how he could turn

their flight to best advantage. He had directed a professional "dodge" to watch their movements for a few days. The reader need scarcely be told that the spy was the elderly gentleman who had so kindly assisted Griselda in her search for a lodging. As he received his fee, he assured his worthy employer that he never earned money more easily, or more entirely to his own satisfaction.



CHAPTER VIII.

It is a great charge for one in Florence to have daughters, for it is a difficult matter to bestow them well, and not to err in the deliberations; therefore, it should be necessary to know one's self, and to take a just measurement both of a man's self and of the nature of things; which would lessen the difficulty, which too great self-presuming, or making an ill judgment on the nature of the affair, doth often increase.—
GUICCIARDINI.

LORD GLARVALE, by dint of assiduous attention, had contrived to keep Florian to his word, and had booked him for a visit to his Kentish villa. This was a matter of some difficulty, as our young hero found engagements accumulate on his hands faster than he could find time to meet them. With Freeborn at his side, he could not be ignorant of the motives which prompted his lordship's homage. He laughed at it, as people always laugh at the servility they secretly encourage while affecting to despise it; yet he found it not at all displeasing to him. Flattery, when it is a novelty, must be very gross indeed to be offensive. A sharp appe-

tite can relish coarse food; and, even when the taste has been humoured and pampered into delicacy, it only becomes more gluttonous as it becomes more epicurean.

His lordship was not a little proud of his success, and perhaps he was right in estimating its importance by the jealousy of his acquaintance. For once his lady, who had a great horror of his management in general, vouchsafed to express her entire approval of his measures. They left town together for their seat, Hurst-place, some days previous to the date fixed by Tremore for his coming, that they might get all things ready for his reception, and they held anxious consultations on the persons to be invited to meet him. They must make his visit pleasant to him—that was a settled point; and to do so it was necessary he should meet two or three persons whose society would be acceptable to him, but who would not be at all in the way of their schemes. The parish rector, a clever chatty person, who had some connection with a member of the government, and who had been presented to the living by “my lord,” in consideration of some good offices promised by the minister’s patron, would come at any time. Major-general

Gascon, though rather borish in his stories, would be useful in filling up a gap in the conversation at any time. A middle-aged cadet of Lord Glarvale's family, lately arrived from Paris, had brought with him a store of anecdotes concerning Louis Napoleon, and his plans and prospects. Still another guest was wanted, of whom Tremore knew something, and whose companionship would be welcome to him. Freeborn was, of course, out of the question. John Smith was asked; he would have been very happy, but he was called to Northampton by a great sale of his farming stock.

"I am not at all sorry for it," remarked the lady on receiving his note; "he is certainly a considerable person, and he has bought the great Marston estate, but he has not mind enough to appreciate such a superior being as Tremore. Besides, though he is a safe man in many respects, he is apt to be candid, as he calls it, and might say disagreeable things, and be in our way. On the whole, he is better in Northamptonshire than here."

To various other names suggested, an objection of some kind applied. Dudley, whose provoking silence, notwithstanding his evi-

dent admiration of Geraldine, caused the prudent parents a vast deal of uneasiness, had better, they agreed, only hear of what was passing. That might bring him forward; while his presence might prevent the attentions of Tremore, and lead to awkward results. At last Damer was recollected. He was retired, quiet, had a high literary reputation (that was as much as the Glarvales knew of him, and all they cared to know), and would be in no one's way. He would be the very man. But would he come? They feared not. At any rate, the trial might be made. A flattering invitation was despatched, and, to the delight of both, was accepted. With the resources of the neighbourhood (which could boast some country gentlemen of ancient families) they had felt sure of agreeable society as long as the visit of Tremore lasted.

In their curtained counsel, the night preceding the expected arrival, they felicitated themselves on their excellent arrangements. But to the one great object of my lady's attention, all their discourse tended. This is Geraldine's fourth season, they argued. Her beauty has lost its attraction by being so familiar—for we have taken care it should be

seen all over Europe; and the sensation she now excites is not at all desirable—for men very seldom marry the girls they admire as clever, and spirited, and witty, and all that.

“For my part,” said the sagacious mamma, “I wish the girl had not a tithe of the sense she has. If she were only silent and sentimental, she might fall into an eligible attachment at once; and, depend on it, no gentleman ever lets a girl with her eyes go into a decline, or break her heart, or die in despair, or any thing of that sort, from unrequited affection. I do believe an observation I saw the other day is quite true; a young woman, if she have not a hump-back, or squinting eyes, may marry any man she pleases; only she must not be too squeamish to make the first move, and that’s the fault I find with Geraldine. I do all I can to make her consider the matter seriously, but she only laughs at my counsel, and points to the motto of the Bedfords.”

“Che sarà, sarà!” solemnly exclaimed Lord Glarville, “what has that to do with her marriage? haugh-whaugh-whaugh!”

“Why, that what is destined to be, will be; but as I tell her, though that looks very well on the scroll of a ducal crest, it does not

sound at all auspiciously in the mouth of a young lady who has to establish herself suitably in the world. Lately she has been more thoughtful, and she looks harassed. I hope she is beginning to consider her prospects in a prudent light. Suppose you speak to her yourself, Glarvale."

"I will consider of it in the morning," answered his lordship, adjusting his pillow preparatory to settling for the night. The truth being, that he, knowing his daughter's sarcastic humour was not always restrained even by parental authority, did not much relish the idea of encountering it on so delicate a subject.

"It is quite time she was settled, and now there really does seem a favourable opportunity. I am sure Mr. Tremore admires her very much, and I can't think why they have met so seldom this last week or so."

"I am sorry to observe it of any member of my family," said his lordship, in as solemn a tone as if he were haranguing the peers; "but Geraldine is a great deal too flighty. Haugh-whaugh! Let it be your part, Lady Glarvale (haugh-whaugh!) to discountenance all dangles, and particularly that Bellstar; though I suppose the fellow will be ashamed

to show his face after what has occurred. Haugh-whaugh-whaugh! Haugh-haugh!"

"I should think so, indeed," rejoined the lady, whose fear that remark had harped aright. But of the suspicions on that head, which had lately broken in upon her mind, she mentioned nothing, only resolving to keep a closer watch upon her daughter than she had ever done before, fearing lest, after all, she might have been wrong in trusting her so entirely to her own discretion. "Not," she thought, "that the girl is a bit the less attractive for looking so pale; it makes her appear the more interesting. And men are so apt to refer every change in a woman's appearance to themselves, that perhaps it is lucky just now. We shall soon see what is to be done."

Thereupon, tired with the fatigue of a bustling day, she fell asleep to dream of a splendid wedding; of her parting with smiles and tears from a happy bride; and of a rent-roll of a hundred thousand a year, with a coronet in perspective.

Alas, for her ladyship, that dreams must be interpreted by their contraries!

CHAPTER IX.

This is admirable ! I am not to pay honour to a man clothed in brocade, and followed by seven or eight lackeys. Why, his very garments bespeak compulsion !—PASCAL.

TREMORE had fallen so much into the fashion of the time as to be persuaded that his moments were inestimably precious. He therefore ordered a special train to convey him the thirty or forty miles he had to travel from town, having previously sent forward his carriages and horses to meet him at the station. He arrived at Hurst-place, just after the dinner-hour, with all the state proper to the representative of one of the greatest fortunes in England. He listened negligently to the raptures of my lord and lady, but was touched by the frank and unaffected welcome of Geraldine. She looked ill and worn ; that sparkling colour which used to lend such animation to her features, had deserted her face ; but her eyes beamed

with their wonted light and kindliness as she gave him her hand. Her demeanour recently had puzzled him. She had avoided his society as far as she could, without positive rudeness. Sensitively alive to any evidence of dislike or neglect, he was wounded by her coolness; for he knew her too well to suppose that she was acting from pride or caprice, and he was unconscious of having given her offence. Sometimes he feared that she might have penetrated his secret; but, at any rate, he resolved to frankly ask for an explanation on the first favourable opportunity; and to that resolve Lord Glarvale was mainly indebted for the honour of his visit.

At table, Tremore found himself seated between her ladyship and Geraldine. Nearly facing him was an antiquated maiden, with as much starch in her face as would have sufficed for an Elizabethan ruff, but finely dressed in the last year's fashions. No one understood the *chiar'oscuro* of social art better than her ladyship. Damer was on the other side of Geraldine; and opposite him was the vicar, making a vain effort to bear up in discourse against the superior calibre and sharper practice of the old officer.

The Major-general—and the character is a very common one in the world—was mightily addicted to stories and anecdotes, of which he was himself the hero. He had a most ingenious way of turning every topic that arose in conversation to his own particular account. All was grist that came to his mill. He never opened his mouth but to magnify himself, and was especially loquacious on his own valour and sagacity. He gave himself credit in the most liberal manner for every good quality under the sun. Not a remark could be made on any subject that did not “put him in mind” of something illustrative of his own magnanimous virtues. Those ingenious traders who seize on every event of the day to call attention to their commodities, and who will manufacture a puff for slop-clothing out of the French revolution, and a recommendation of vegetable pills from the Gorham controversy, could not show greater dexterity in their way than he did in his. He would catch you by pretending to open with a reminiscence of Napoleon, and end with an extraordinary shot he had last autumn, when he bagged three brace of birds by a single discharge.

While he was victimising the vicar, by

relating, with the utmost particularity of detail, how he had “winged” a brother officer for having dared to venture a jest on his veracity—a story he had been put in mind of by the excellent flavour of some vermicelli soup—Florian, in an aside to Geraldine, apologized for being so late—throwing the blame on the engine, which had taken thirty-seven minutes and a half to perform the distance, instead of twenty-eight and a quarter, and hoped he had not kept dinner waiting. The vicar eagerly seizing the chance of escaping from *his* old man of the sea—(it is to be feared nearly every one is troubled in one shape or other with such a disagreeable companion)—and of mingling in the conversation of the upper part of the table—observed punctuality to dinner was a duty one owed to the cook if not to one’s self, and instanced the susceptibility of that class of artistes by the fate of Vatel, the *chef* of the great Condé, who, on his master being honoured with a visit by Louis Quatorze, committed suicide in a fit of frenzy, caused by the non-arrival of some fish he had reckoned on for the second course. Having finished his anecdote, he asked Tremore, to the amazement and indignation of Lord

Glarvale, to take wine with him, ordering the butler to bring champagne.

"Perhaps, sir," the peer said, in an aside, when he had recovered himself a little, "you may not be aware that that practice has fallen into desuetude for a very long time, haugh-whaugh! I mention this, lest you should think *I* could be guilty of the rudeness of neglecting guests who honour me with their presence. Haugh! Whaugh-whaugh! Haugh."

After this dignified rebuke, his lordship removed his eyes from the offending individual, and deigned him no further notice. The vicar laughed good-humouredly, and said that fashions got into the country as the cast-off clothes of people of quality got into Monmouth-street.

"When you have done with them in town they reach us here, and, while fancying ourselves extremely polite, we get laughed at for our assumption of threadbare airs. There is this comfort for us, however—when we have done with them, they may still be expected to figure at the court of his sable majesty of Hayti, or the Sandwich islands, as the rags of finery fall at last to the sweeps for May-day wear. Who is your *arbiter ele-*

gantiarum in town now?" he asked, addressing an old young gentleman just arrived from Paris.

"If you had asked me last season," returned the elderly lady, "I should have said Bellstar. I don't know what has been passing since I have been on the continent. I hear he's had a terrible fall, poor fellow!"

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Lord Glarvale in an accent of indignation. "Poor fellow, indeed! Haugh, haugh! I regard that man as a complete impostor. Haugh-whaugh-whaugh! I have it on the best authority, that he has been living for years past on his creditors, and been making plaster casts, or something of that sort, which he sold under a feigned name."

At the close of this speech, his lordship crowed as if he had completely annihilated the unfortunate object of his indignation.

"I have been told," Geraldine observed in a low voice, "that by his talents as an artist, he has entirely supported himself since he discovered the extent of his embarrassments, and that he gave up to usurers, who have imposed on him, the whole produce of his estates. He could scarcely have

been living on his creditors while honourably labouring for his own support."

"An impostor! Oh, certainly, a scandalous impostor!" ejaculated the Major-general, coming up to the peer's support, while his lordship was studying a majestic rebuke for his daughter. "He'll never have the impudence to show his face again. There are several persons anxious to call him to account, I hear, for inducing them to purchase under false pretences. He reminds me of a scamp who thrust himself into our society at Paris just after Waterloo. He met with a great fall, too."

"A great fall! How was that?" asked the antiquated maiden, who was not up to the general's traps.

"Simply, madam, by my throwing him out of the window of the Hotel de Ville, on occasion of a state ball! But I couldn't do it now."

"I should think not!" exclaimed the vicar, surveying the shrivelled face and shrunken limbs of the hero.

"No, on account of this gun-shot wound here," said the General, grasping his left arm as if he still felt the pain of it; though report said the only wound he ever received

was in a part of his body which it would not be proper to particularize.

While this passed, Geraldine had coloured deeply. Woman can display infinitely more patience than man when indignities are offered to herself. She can be silent under wrong, and hoard her passion or her tears till the moment when she can give way to them in solitude. But never can she feign indifference to abuse of the man she loves. That is a trial beyond her patience. Not even the sense of shame can restrain the instinct of her devotion. In her eagerness to defend him she forgets herself, careless though the shaft of calumny which is aimed at his bosom should pierce her own. Juliet falls into her own snare when she tampers with her nurse. The fond old creature no sooner yields to her feigned humour, and wishes shame to Romeo, than she forgets her own artifice—forgets the necessity of concealment—forgets every thing but her love, in an outburst of indignation—

“ Now blister’d be thy tongue for such a wish ;
Upon *his* brow shame is ashamed to sit.
It is a throne where honour may sit crown’d,
Sole monarch of the universal world.”

Unmindful of her rising colour, and of the

suspicious to which her warmth might give rise, Geraldine cast a scornful glance at the warrior as she remarked—

“You seem to have changed your opinion of Mr. Bellstar very suddenly, General. I think I can recollect the time when you esteemed it a great distinction to be admitted to his table.”

“That,” rejoined the General coolly, “was before I found him out. The fellow took me in completely.”

“Took you in! Oh yes! I know you were a frequent visiter. But, as to being imposed upon, I fancy he was more sinned against than sinning. His fault was an excess of generosity. He showered benefits upon people who now can find no better amusement than slandering him.”

She spoke in a low tone; but there was a tremor in her voice which betrayed her agitation. Damer had hitherto been silent, but had bent on her his glance full of respectful sympathy. As the General was about to make an angry reply, which must have drawn general notice to the altercation, Damer quietly interposed by remarking, that such a warning as Bellstar had received often exercised a most salutary influence on charac-

ters like his, by inspiring them with energy, and teaching them the necessity of prudence.

This remark found little countenance from any one except Geraldine, who rewarded it with a bright smile. To the vicar, who shook his head with the rest, Damer replied by a quotation—

*"Duris ut illex tonsa bipennibus
Nigræ feraci frondis in Algidis,
Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro."*

"May I not share the wisdom of your Latin?" Geraldine asked.

"It is from Horace," said the vicar; "alluding to the growth of the Roman power, he compares it to an oak, lopped by keen axes in the thick woods of Algidus, which, through losses and slaughter, gathers strength and spirit from the very iron that strips it of its fertile foliage."

"I perceive," she said, "the force of the quotation. What encouragement for those suffering under reverses!"

"Yes," said Damer, "the verse is as just as it is beautiful. Poetry never suggested a nobler image, nor truth a finer moral."

"Nay," interposed the vicar, "I must not suffer you to have such an easy victory.

The lessons of adversity are good only for the vigorous and self-relying. The ilex may gather strength from those strokes of the axe which would bring a feeble tree to the earth. Is not that the true reading of Horace?"

"Undoubtedly!" replied Damer. "The misfortune which invigorates one man will crush another. But, ordinarily, the stroke and the temper of that axe which is wielded, not by the woodman, but by the hand of Providence, are accommodated to the nature of the tree it is intended to prune. Do you not see that, when its blows fail to impart energy, they may teach prudence or resignation; that if they do not inspire the rage of conquest, they may give something better—a spirit of contentment with humility? If circumstances do not change character, they certainly do affect states of mind; and those disasters which the world regards as great calamities, may in their effects lead from darkness to light—from bondage to freedom."

"You have given the argument another turn," said the vicar; "but I understand it—

*'Qui tantuli eget, quanto est opus, is neque limo
Turbatam haurit aquam, neque vitam amittit in undis.'*"

"I must call on you for a translation again, Doctor," said Geraldine.

“With pleasure, madam; but you must have it with the context. The poet, ridiculing the miser who would rather take what food he needs from a full granary than a household meal-tub, likens him to a man who, requiring only a pitcher of water, will go for it to a swollen river rather than to a clear fountain. Desiring to supply his necessity from a greater abundance than is necessary, the violent stream carries him away with the torn bank; but, adds the poet, ‘the man who is satisfied with so much as he requires from the spring, neither draws turbid water nor perishes in the waves.’”

“A good illustration of my meaning,” observed Damer. “Whether adversity inspires new energy to repair disasters, or whether it teaches thankfulness with an humble fortune, surely its lessons are equally profitable.

‘ Multa petentibus

Desunt multa. Bene est, cui Deus obtulit

Parca quod satis est manu.’

‘Much is wanting to him desiring much. Blessed is he to whom God has given what is needful with a sparing hand!’ The chances are, that Bellstar will be a better and happier man for the check he has received.”

“Do you know,” said Geraldine, “that

you almost make me in love with your Horace? I wish I could understand him."

"You must be content with a reflection of his spirit in Beranger," returned Damer.

"Does he then, of all our moderns, most resemble Horace?" she asked.

"I think so," he replied. "Had Beranger lived like Horace, under a despotism, he might have been equally gay and courtly, contented and careless, and might have addressed his verses to the great, instead of speaking to the hearts of the people. As it is, you see how, in spite of his political hostilities, he plays with the flowers which grow by the roadside of life; how he lingers amid the commonplaces of humanity—the cottage of the peasant—the attic of the artisan—the barrack-room of the conscript—and casts over them the light of poetic beauty, and the joyousness of his genial spirit. He has more sentiment than Horace, but less genius—more feeling, but less truth. Horace is never pathetic; Beranger is so often. We admire the Roman for his intimate knowledge of life and character—a knowledge so subtle and profound, as to give value to every line he wrote, and to make his maxims the common property of all na-

tions. Never did wisdom appear in so charming a dress, or in such harmonious numbers. We esteem Beranger, on the contrary, for his fresh and unsophisticated feeling, and child-like simplicity. But their philosophy is the same.

— 'Deos didici securum agere ævum,'

might serve as the motto for both. They look with contempt on the toils and cares which men court in pursuit of riches and distinction, and with abhorrence on the vices which wait on their chase; and, esteeming life too short, too mutable, too surely the sport of fortune to be worth much anxiety, they cherish fleeting pleasures as the only pleasures they shall know; make all good consist in their enjoyment; and avoid reference to the future, or allude to it only to heighten present delights, by contrast with the melancholy shade which surrounds the tomb."

He pursued the parallel further; touched on the characteristic beauties of each poet, and showed their resemblance to each other, in the boldness, splendour, and fertility of their images. Then, satisfied with having turned the conversation, and drawn atten-

tion from Geraldine to himself, and with having given a sufficient number of catch-words to persons listening for subjects to talk on, he joined the gentleman from Paris in chit-chat on Louis Napoleon, Lamartine, and Red Republicanism; and afterwards, with an effort of good-nature, of which few were capable, he relieved the vicar of the Major-general, and sustained the burden of his dreary monologues without complaint, until the moment when he could rise to rejoin the ladies.

He had attempted to mask the indiscretion of Geraldine, and hoped he had succeeded in his object. But he had not allowed for the quickness of a mother's eye. Lady Glarvale had marked her daughter's agitation with extreme anxiety. Like a flash of lightning, the conviction burst on her that Geraldine loved the disgraced and ruined Bellstar. But almost as quickly came the consolatory thought, that even so, though it might for a time disturb her peace, it could not affect her position or their hopes. "She will renounce him of course," thought her ladyship, "and perhaps marry the sooner and better, as hundreds of girls have done before her, for the very reason of having contracted an un-

fortunate and hopeless attachment. For now, liking one man as well as another, she will have nothing to look to in her choice but the advantages of rank and fortune, which is in some respects a very happy state of mind, and pretty sure to lead to a splendid alliance."

CHAPTER X.

Most miserable
Is the desire that's glorious ! Bless'd be those,
How mean soe'er, that have their honest will
Which seasons comfort.

SHAKESPEARE.

DAMER was an excellent musician, and stood beside Geraldine as she played some pieces from Meyerbeer, with the spirit and knowledge of the master which always marked her performance. It might be that they were discoursing on the music—nothing more natural; or that they were criticizing the rival operas—nothing more likely. But, whatever their theme, it seemed to possess for both a deep interest; and at moments the features of Damer lost their usual tranquillity, and assumed an expression of the deepest tenderness and sympathy. Lady Glarvale moved towards the instrument. She was surprised and delighted when Tre-

more, in answer to her question, avowed he could read music with facility. She complimented him on the variety of his accomplishments; and when he expressed his unqualified admiration of Meyerbeer, she was equally delighted with the excellence of his taste, and challenged him to show his skill, while she summoned Damer to solve a disputed quotation.

"Like a deserted bird's-nest filled with snow!" she exclaimed. "I am sure it is Shakspeare's. It is so touching and so natural. Do tell me in which of his plays it is to be found. There is a wager of a whitebait dinner depending on it."

"I do not recollect the line," Damer answered; "but I think I can engage it is not Shakspeare's."

"Not Shakspeare's! How provoking! I could have sworn it was his. We are quite at fault again, Doctor."

"Pray, Sir," asked a country gentleman of ancient family, who was a party to the wager, "do you speak from positive knowledge of the poet's text?"

"No," Damer answered; "for in such a case our memory is more apt to mislead us than our judgment. It would not be diffi-

cult to prove that the line belongs to a much later age than Shakspeare's."

"How do you make that out?" enquired the vicar.

"Do *you* ask me?" returned Damer; "who, in picking up a fossil, would tell me to what period of creation it is to be referred? In all sciences and all arts—in literature among the rest—there are gradations of style and progress, the tendency being always towards greater refinement. Do not think it strange, then, that a student of literature should be able to pronounce with certainty to what age any line which has a marked character belongs, though he cannot name the author."

"To what age, then, shall we refer this image of the bird's-nest filled with snow?" pursued the vicar.

"To our own age, undoubtedly. It is too pretty to be very remote. It belongs to the school of Wordsworth and Tennyson, though it may be due to some inferior disciple."

"Wordsworth! Ha, I recollect," cried Lady Glarvale. "I acknowledge my error. I think I can find the line in his works."

While the search was being prosecuted,

Damer withdrew. Some minutes afterwards he was missed, when the party for the dinner which had been wagered was being made up. One of the company stepped to a window, and drew aside the curtain. The full moon beautifully lit up the surrounding landscape.

"There he is," said the General, who was gifted with a peculiarly sharp sense of vision, "half a mile off; and, by Jove! there are two of them. I shouldn't wonder if he hadn't made acquaintance with your poacher, Lord Glarvale. These literary people have a queer choice in their acquaintance."

"A poacher! Bless me," exclaimed the country gentleman, "that ought to be looked to!"

"It is not within my remembrance," observed his lordship with due solidity, "that I used the word 'poacher' when complaining to some of my people this morning of a trespasser on my grounds. Haugh-haugh! The man may have been attracted by the beauty of the scenery, or by a report of the guests about to honour me with their presence. Since the introduction of railroads, it is difficult to secure any place from intrusion. Haugh! whaugh-whaugh-whaugh! But pro-

bably the person we have observed at a distance may not be one of those presuming personages. He may be one of Mr. Damer's artistic friends. Are they there now, General? I do not see any one."

"They have this instant turned down the laurel walk," replied the warrior. "I dare say you will have a discourse on moonshine from Mr. Damer to-morrow. Speaking of poachers, by the way, reminds me"—There-with he seized on the country gentleman, with a grasp as tight as that of the ancient mariner on the hungry guest expectant of dinner, and never loosed his hold until the company broke up for the evening.

Tremore in his agreeable occupation soon found himself alone with Geraldine. The other guests respected the vigilant supervision of Lady Glarvale. Though she thought herself unperceived, every one understood the game she was playing, and withdrew from interference with it.

It is strange that the prudent mamma, so sharp-sighted on all points concerning her daughters, and so quick in watching the movements of others, should imagine that all her own manœuvring passes unobserved; that no one perceives why she pays so much

attention to the young gentleman who has just come into possession of a fine and unencumbered fortune ; that no one remarks why she praises her Clara's frugality to young Hunks, or extols the accomplishments of Matilda to the vain and wealthy Peagreen ; that envy is blind and gossip silent when she makes room for them in the carriage, the music-room, or the garden-walk, beside her dear girls. She is ignorant all the time that ridicule and malevolence make her their prey—and why? Simply because she is herself unconscious of what she does, and knows nothing of that secret spring which directs her actions. A mother's life from first to last is all mystery—all blindness. Her children are her angels ; their happiness is her heaven. She is no more conscious of sneer and taunt, when directing all her thoughts to their establishment in life, than she is of ridicule, when bending over them in infancy, finding thrilling music in their cries, and tracing a thousand beauties in their undeveloped features.

Tremore's manner was always sympathizing. He had that susceptible temperament which reflects every change of mood and scene, and can weep or laugh twenty times

in the same hour. He quickly caught a shade of sadness from the expressive features of Geraldine, and the more readily that her dejection seemed so foreign to her joyous nature. We feel the force of sorrow most impressively, not when it is most noisy and passionate, but when we see it forcing its way into a heart which courageously resists its entrance, and crushing the buoyant temper which had seemed to present insuperable obstacles to its progress. Tremore, in a few kind words, noticed the change in her appearance, and enquired after her health. She replied that she was perfectly well, but that it was no wonder if she showed some symptoms of the wear of life.

“Have you not heard,” she asked, “that those faces become soonest wrinkled which are condemned to wear a feigned expression? It is a pity that the old practice of wearing masks is not revived; it would save a great deal of trouble and suffering.”

“Is it possible,” he exclaimed, “that Lady Geraldine can have any suffering to conceal?”

“Oh!” she replied, jestingly, “you must know the old story of Cæsar and his shoe. The sandal he exposed to the gaping crowd was, to all appearance, a most finished piece

of workmanship; not a cordwainer in Rome could discover a fault in its make; yet it pinched him wofully, nevertheless. Has not your experience of the gay world disclosed something of this to you?"

"Something, certainly. I have seen struggling and distress where I never thought to find them. But, from the first moment I saw you, I thought you one of the most favoured of mortals."

"The *couleur de rose* must have been cast on me by your own fancy. Did you ever read the story of Ximenes and the monk who preached to him against luxury?"

"Not that I recollect; pray, tell it me."

"Ximenes, who wore the splendid robes proper to the greatness of his station, once listened to the sermon of a Dominican, who eloquently inveighed against the vanities of the world; and, amongst the rest, anathematized sumptuous apparel. The cardinal took the friar aside at the end of his discourse. 'You did well, my son,' he said, 'to denounce the pomps of life; but do not let appearances deceive you.' And therewith he opened his ermine robe, and displayed his shirt of the coarsest sackcloth, and his skin deeply lacerated by the scourge."

"But fortunately—or unfortunately for the point of your story—this age is too wise for monastic penance, and the infliction of unnecessary pain."

"Truly so; but do not, on that account, think we can get rid of those pains which lie much deeper. Could some, who appear the gayest amongst us, expose the heart, as easily as the cardinal could open his robe, you might see a much sorrier sight than the sackcloth shirt and the bleeding skin."

"You are unhappy, then? You suffer from some secret sorrow?"

"Hush!" she replied quickly, "I did not say so." She glanced round to ascertain that no one was within hearing distance, and then resumed. "You think my station a happy one. Ask yourself what there is in it so very desirable. You must have heard something of my father's foibles; you must have heard a great deal of his straitened fortune. His daughters are an encumbrance on him; can you wonder, then, at my mother's anxiety? I have grown callous to sneer and innuendo, and can now speak plainly of things which at one time made me faint with shame, or desperate with passion. You must have been cautioned against me, and

heard me characterised as a flirt, only anxious to sell myself to the best advantage. I see I pain you," she added, reading in his heightened colour the truth of her words—"forgive me. I will not press you for an answer. Let us change the subject. Would you like some of these airs from the Huguenots?"

"I shall be delighted. But, now you are in a frank humour, I wish you to answer a question for me."

"*Cela depend!* First, have I the skill? next, have I the will?"

"You shall hear. When our acquaintance commenced, I was more indebted to you than I can express for your obliging cordiality. Lately, I seem by the change in your manner to have lost your good opinion. Have I not a right to enquire the cause of this change?"

She fixed her lively and penetrating glance upon him for an instant before she answered—

"You have the right, if you possess the spirit to hear a candid answer without offence."

"Indeed, I wish you to speak to me without reserve. I am so new to the world, that I daresay I have already committed

many faults; but I am not conscious of having given you offence. I have the wish to correct my errors; will you not help me to do so?"

"Alas! advice is unwelcome in proportion as it is sincere. I have just finished some letters of Wilhelm Humboldt. 'I care very little,' he says in one of them, 'either to ask or to give advice. People who ask advice have usually determined their course without its help. The resolutions of a man must be his own.'"

"Admitting this, yet, when error is unintentional, it is a friendly office to point it out."

"I am not sure of that; not, at least, when the error proceeds from character; for then, as we heard at table to-day, it is unlikely to be ever corrected. But I will speak frankly, as you wish it. A month ago, I seemed instinctively to divine that you possessed an ingenuous and liberal nature. Admiring a disposition so different from the worldliness to which I had been accustomed, and grateful for the preference you manifested for me at our first interview, I felt desirous of conciliating your esteem, thinking that, perhaps, my counsel—I was so vain as to think this

—might be of some service to you in the new and perilous career on which you had entered—might preserve you from some temptations, and save you from some evil. You may recollect with what freedom I spoke to you on different occasions.”

“I do, and remember it most gratefully.”

“You might have heard my frankness ascribed to unworthy motives. I dare say you did. I knew the risk I ran of being misunderstood, but I did not regard that; for I have long since ceased to care much for gossiping opinion.”

“Believe me, I always thought you superior to it, and equally incapable of caprice. I was, therefore, the more pained by your coldness, and am the more anxious to know its cause.”

“Frankly, then, your conduct in some instances led me to conceive that you were one of those persons whose very good-nature is a snare to them, giving them over as a prey to designing and worthless men. For such persons we can never feel any other sentiment than pity. For weakness in this world there is no salvation.”

Tremore's face reddened with indignation. She observed it, and continued—

"I knew I should anger you. Hear me without impatience for some moments longer. If I pain you now, it is only that I may save you from much deeper pain hereafter."

"I do not know, Lady Geraldine," he said, with the stiffness of offended pride, "what could have led you to judge me so severely. I must beg you to be more particular in your explanation."

"I will. Why did you give Dudley your interest for Littlewit? You cannot like him. Besides, the interest of Cavendish was pledged to Bellstar. You should have respected his promise."

"Unfortunately, Mr. Bellstar's political principles"——

"Stay! we shall not agree if you proceed. To confess an error is noble, manly, high-spirited; to defend or to excuse it—well, I will not go on. Nothing grieves me more than to hear from friendly lips apologies I cannot accept—explanations which are not in the spirit of truth. I have heard the history of that affair, but I will not offend you by repeating the boasts of parties concerned in it."

"I suppose you allude to Freeborn? I will take care that he is more cautious in mentioning my name in future."

"Your suspicions are wrong in this instance, and your anger would be misplaced, even were they right. You know his character, and are content to make use of him. Why should you complain if he or others take advantage of those opportunities of abusing you, which you willingly afford them?"

"Is your indictment gone through, Lady Geraldine? or are there further counts in it?"

"I wished to make you sensible of the danger you ran from that common fault of a generous nature—indiscriminate compliance with requests cunningly preferred; and one instance is enough. Be more careful in your choice of companions; beware how you suffer the trifles of the world to obtain, through habit or indolence, an ascendancy over you; reflect that much will be required from those to whom much is given; consider that in all stations and pursuits he who looks highest is the best man. That is the end of my lecture. I would not have read it you, had I thought there was any one about you who would have been equally sincere."

"Surely your explanation cannot be finished yet! Why are you more friendly to me now than you were a week past?"

“I will tell you the whole truth, as I promised. Within these few days I have heard an instance of your generosity—of your goodness, which would suffice to cover much weightier errors than any you have committed, to my knowledge at least. To serve your friend—the friend whom I had accused you of sacrificing—you were willing to overstep those cold rules of prudence which substitute the wisdom of the head for the instincts of the heart. It was a fine saying of one of the heroes of antiquity, that he would sooner not leave enough behind him to raise a stone to his memory, than leave a living friend in want. You have an equally generous spirit; I admire you for it, and hope that time will bring with it its own lessons of discrimination. Now you have the secret of my sincerity. Perhaps it may disarm your anger to know that it had its source in the warmest wishes for your happiness.”

Tremore had coloured deeply at the compliment to his generosity—delivered with all the heat of genuine feeling. Perhaps he might have explained that he did not deserve it; but for this she gave him no time. She left Meyerbeer for some of the fairy music

of Schubert, and threw off his airy fancies with such rapid brilliancy as to leave little opening for conversation. She ceased only to engage in a carpet dance, for which the arrival of some young people furnished a fair pretence; and for the rest of the evening displayed a flow of spirit and animation of manner which charmed all present except the mammas who had daughters to get off, and lulled to rest the fears—if not the suspicions—of Lady Glarvale. •

CHAPTER XI.

As star that shines dependent upon star
Is to the sky, while we look up in love ;
As to the deep fair ships which, though they move,
Seem fix'd to eyes that watch them from afar ;
As to the sandy desert fountains are,
With palm-groves shaded at wide intervals,
Whose fruit around the sunburnt native falls,
Of roving tired, or desultory war :—
Such to this British Isle her Christian Fanes,
Each link'd to each for kindred services ;
Her spires, her steeple-towers with glittering vanes
Far-kenn'd ; her chapels lurking among trees,
Where a few villagers on bended knees
Find solace, which a busy world disdains.

WORDSWORTH.

SOME days quickly flew by in the round of excursions and pleasures which had been got up for Tremore's amusement. Hurst-place was delightfully seated on the sloping brow of one of the boldest of the Kentish hills, and from the windows of the house, and different parts of the grounds, there were views of that gently undulating scenery—of hill and dale, woodland and plain—which make the whole of this part of

the country appear like a beautiful garden, laid out for picturesque effect. The grounds were not large, but had been made quite a show-place by a former owner. Paths through tangled woodland led to a mimic waterfall, with a lake smooth as a mirror at its foot, and gipsy tents on its banks, and Chinese boats and Indian canoes on its surface. On the highest point of land was an observatory, from whence views could be obtained of the far-stretching valleys of the Thames and Medway on one side, and glimpses of the distant ocean on the other. "My lord,"—though his poverty was confessed—was yet a great man in the immediate vicinity of his "Place;" and it must be confessed Lady Glarvale showed consummate judgment in the locality she chose to display her daughter to the best advantage. Geraldine neither made herself conspicuous by fussy superintendence of village-schools, by ostentatious alms—nor by patronising charity. But she made the blessing of her presence felt by the interest she took in the circumstances and welfare of every family which came within the sphere of her influence. It was easy for her to do this, she said and felt. Real, unaffected kindness of

heart, is one of those graces of the spirit which win attention and gratitude from simple and lowly people, even when unaccompanied by gifts of the hand. Her beauty, her rank, her open demeanour, her charming gaiety, all tended to enhance her kindness, and to make it appear more gracious. Yet she might not have obtained that place in their hearts had her condescension been visible, or had she imagined the interest she really took in their condition could ever have been deemed so. It was because she regarded them as related to her by the common tie of humanity, and made them feel this, that they rendered her the affectionate homage which wealth and station of themselves, nor even the most lavish profusion of expenditure, can ever obtain. Lord Glarvale, though he often wondered at her vulgar tastes in this respect, and said it made the people presuming, was not insensible to the merit of her popularity; while his lady, truly proud of it, was fond of seizing occasions to bring it into view.

Each morning did the inventive genius of this excellent manager contrive some new rural fête for our hero's gratification. The kind of life was so new to him, that he

entered into it with a zest of hearty enjoyment—and no wonder. For what can seem so captivating to the youth, new to the world, as to be admitted a favoured guest into the bosom of a family, where every art—concealed so well that the effect alone is felt—is made use of to present him with a serene and graceful picture of domestic felicity? The attractions of feathers and jewels by wax-light, yield to those of the pretty muslin dress and braided hair worn at the breakfast-table; the bustle of the assembly and the quick change of partners to the freshness of the morning walk over smooth-shaven lawns, or amid flower-beds with a fair botanist to detect and moralize on their beauties; the glare and the glitter of fashionable display, to the quiet enjoyments and amiable qualities which peep forth in that sanctuary of domestic virtue—an English home.

Though Geraldine still maintained a show of exuberant spirits, yet it became evident that her health was really declining. With consummate tact, Lady Glarvale insinuated into Tremore's ear, in a hundred different ways, that he was the cause of her daughter's depression. She could talk sentiment admirably, for she was a proficient in the school

of Balzac. She said that the presence of the man a girl loved in secret, nourished the flame which devoured her heart, and, like the most insidious of all maladies, gave hectic excitement to the spirits, while it preyed on the functions of life. She referred the change in Geraldine to something that must have occurred within the last month or six weeks, "for she was in perfect health when you first saw her, you know." She dreaded to call in medical advice, as she felt assured her illness was occasioned by some pressure on the spirits, and not by physical disease; and medical men would ask questions which it was sometimes impossible to answer satisfactorily. And then she would speak of breaking hearts as a common malady of refined natures, and quote Byron to show how the springs of life might be undermined, before any disease seized on the frame or the body decayed—

"They mourn, but smile at length, and smiling mourn :
The tree will wither long before it fall ;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn ;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
In massy hoariness; the ruined wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthrall ;
The day drags through, though storms keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on."

Tremore was not the dupe of these representations; yet he fell in with them to the extent of yielding himself to her ladyship's guidance, which was all she desired. He favoured her designs so far, that he availed himself of those facilities she constantly afforded him of being at her daughter's side. Her society had for him a pleasure which he did not care to scrutinize very closely; and, when he thought on the subject, he satisfied himself by reflecting that it was only natural to be attracted by a mind so highly cultivated, and to be charmed by such varied accomplishments. Before he was aware of it, his attention gave rise to hints and reports, which, to do him justice, had no foundation in his thoughts. The spirits of Geraldine more visibly sank; her manner towards him again became restrained, though occasionally it seemed to him that she was on the point of speaking freely to him, when some fear or scruple checked her.

Lady Glarvale was perfectly sincere in the anxiety she expressed for her daughter's health. But how was it, then, that she studiously avoided seeking her confidence? The truth was, that she dreaded to have her suspicions confirmed. It is better, she thought,

that I should be ignorant of what is passing in her mind, if indeed she has contracted that attachment which there is every reason to dread. Mr. Tremore's partiality for her is evident. He is all that any woman could desire in a partner for life ; and, if he can be brought to the point, I do not doubt that I can persuade Geraldine to accept him, and in the end her happiness will be secured. I must contrive to throw them together a little more.

The next morning was devoted to a ramble through the woods, and a visit to a hermitage, once famous as the retreat of a Catholic saint, whose history and miracles had just been wrested from the dust of past ages, by the industry of some zealous medævalite. But unfortunately nearly every member of the party had some pressing engagement for that morning. My lord must attend those troublesome sessions ; she must remain at home to receive some expected guests ; the Major-general was engaged in editing his despatches, after the example of "the duke ;" Damer was writing letters. But there was Geraldine—she would be happy to show the way through the woods ; and two of her wild young sisters would like

to accompany her, if Mr. Tremore would not think them too troublesome. From the hermitage to the church was but a few hundred yards; and there Damer, who knew all about architecture and brasses, would join them in a couple of hours; and afterwards, as the day was so clear, they might go to the observatory, where there were some fine instruments.

As Lady Glarvale anticipated, the young girls broke from the side of Geraldine in the tangled foliage, attracted by some of those thousand objects which, in the wildness of nature, catch the fancy of childhood. Geraldine was unusually depressed; she made some efforts to rouse herself; but they were visibly attended with so much pain that she gave up the attempt, and confessed to a feeling of insupportable languor.

"Had we not better return?" Tremore asked; "your pallor alarms me."

"No," she replied; "the air and the shade will do me good after a while. Let us keep walking. Do not concern yourself about me. This faintness will soon pass off."

"I wish it were in my power to relieve you. I fear you suffer more than you allow us to perceive."

"I do!" she cried, with a burst of irrepressible emotion, which forced tears to her eyes, and for a moment coloured her cheek. "How much!—O God, how much!—no heart can conceive!"

Tremore was startled, almost frightened, at her hysteric exclamation. "I feared this," he said soothingly; "but surely your sufferings might admit of relief, if you would make them known."

"To whom should I make them known? To give my confidence to you would only needlessly embarrass you, and I dare trust no one else. I beg, I entreat you, not to mention this again! Excuse my abruptness; when do you quit us? You have already exceeded the time you came for."

He acknowledged he had; but said he found so much to interest him that he had not yet fixed a day for his departure.

"Then you must do so instantly!" she said with firmness; "it is necessary for my sake."

"Is it possible," he asked with surprise, "that my presence can contribute to your uneasiness?"

"Indeed it does, just now," she returned, "though at another time I should be delighted with your society. Surely you can-

not be blind to what is passing around us; you cannot be ignorant, that every hour you prolong your stay—every little attention you pay me—give countenance to those rumours which pain me more than I can express?”

“This never occurred to me before,” he said with some embarrassment; “nor did I think that any idle misconception could have caused you so much pain.”

“It is not that,” she replied quickly, “not that; but”—— She paused, then added, “I find it impossible to explain myself so freely as I could wish, or tell you why it is, that your presence at my side so frequently is almost a stain upon my honour. But now I have said so much, I must be explicit. You can hardly fail to perceive what thoughts your good-natured preference of my society, raises in the mind of my parents. I see clearly their expectations. How will you justify yourself to them when they demand an explanation of your conduct? Should your answer be favourable to their hopes, Heaven only knows what would become of me! Is it right in you to expose me to the peril of a mother’s anger—a father’s renunciation? I have been open with you. You

know the footing on which I placed our intercourse when I first saw you. Go, then,—go at once! While you remain, another cord is added to the rack which stretches me.”

Before he could reply, the young girls returned with some glittering beetles they had found in a bed of roses, and, ere they commenced some new chase, careless converse was heard behind a leafy screen. In a moment more the foliage was pushed aside, and Lady Glarvale with a group of guests appeared. It was her policy to sustain the relish which her quick eye perceived Tremore had caught for the society of Geraldine, and she thought no regimen so well adapted for that purpose as to allow its indulgence only by fits and starts, and break in upon it when his pleasure was likely to be at its height. My lord had got away from the sessions, as there was not a quorum for the despatch of business; the Major-general had brought down his labours to the close of one of his famous retreats with a detachment, whose safety he had admirably secured with only the loss of its guns, colours, baggage, and stragglers. Damer had finished his letters; and so they were now all ready to visit the church

—to inspect the arms taken from the Norman pirates when they tried to burn the village—and to take some Seltzer water in the observatory on their return. The group broke away, and, very unaccountably, Tremore found himself in company with the Major-general, condemned to listen to the whole account of his great retreat, during a walk of half a mile, which he thought would never come to an end, along a shadeless gravel-walk, in a burning sun.

But his accomplished hostess was too wise to let him have more than just so much of this olive as might serve to give greater relish to his wine. At the church porch she re-grouped the party, giving Tremore in charge to Geraldine and Damer.

As they moved round the aisles together, Geraldine pointed to some dilapidations, and regretted that they should exist to the disfigurement of the fine old building.

“The rage for church-building has infected us,” she said, “and a large sum has been raised to build a new chapel; while this fine old structure, as you see, is suffered to decay.”

“Even in this retired place, then,” observed Damer, “you have fallen into the

common error of supposing that churches can be multiplied as fast as subscription-lists or rates can be gathered for their erection?"

"And why not?" asked Tremore. "Can there be any other obstacle to the multiplication of churches than the want of funds?"

"In one sense certainly there cannot. But there is some mistake in supposing that those new buildings can have the sanctity and authority of a church which has stood for ages, like this."

"I understand you," Geraldine remarked quickly; "this church has been connected time out of mind with the daily life of the people who worship in it. It is associated with all the epochs of their existence—with all their ideas of happiness and suffering—with all their family traditions. It is here that they have been brought to the font, to share in the privileges and hopes which are open to the humblest Christian—here that they have stood at the altar at a time when their hearts were most open to pure and gentle influences—here they have publicly sought relief from grievous sickness, and have offered up thanksgiving for mercies vouchsafed. The voices of the dead are every where around them. The walls per-

petuate the good deeds of as many generations as have flourished and faded since they were first raised. Look up at these tablets, which record the charity and piety of persons whose names would have perished but for this enduring memorial of their virtue. One, you see, founded the village-school we passed on our way, endowing it with lands to maintain it *for ever*; another established a fund for the relief of widows and orphans; a third, poorer in means, left a dole of bread for the poor on every Christian festival; a fourth, gave the plate which furnishes the table for the supper of our Lord. Every gift to the church and to the poor finds mention here; even to that of 'the stranger,' who left 'one paten' on partaking of the sacrament. No one who has not lived in a secluded place like this can imagine the pure influence which this centre of individual history, the church, has by its associations, its monuments, and its remembrances, upon the character of the people."

"All this has to be created in a new church," Damer continued; "and how many generations must pass to effect it! And see, this temple is associated with the history of the nation, too. These old, deeply-graven

stones we tread on, which the zeal or rapacity of the Puritans has despoiled of their brass, and whose very sculpture is almost obliterated by the tread of peasants, recall a time of strife and violence—rude and hard as the massive granite itself—when valour was virtue, strength law, and the sword the sole arbiter of right and of truth. In better preservation are those tombs, with long inscriptions in barbarous Latin, and emblazoned with gilding and colour, emblematic of the pomp and wealth of sanctified prelates, who raised the crosier above the sword, and in the scheme of Providence, laid deep and firm, amid the growing corruptions of their own church, the foundations of public justice, and of equal laws.”

“Alas!” sighed Geraldine, “that the advent of a purer faith should be remembered here only by rapine and destruction. Those naked windows were once, I have heard, richly illuminated with figures of saints and confessors, and that paltry proscenium, with its daub of royal arms, was once a screen adorned with the most precious works of the chisel. It is in these old edifices that we feel something is wanting to our faith which that of Rome possessed.”

“And that something—what was it, do you think?” said Tremore.

“A spirit of deeper and more profound devotion, I suppose,” she replied. “A French critic, who, in the midst of his flighty fancies, often throws out some beautiful thoughts, says, that, in the old time, ‘to build a church was not to raise an edifice, but to accomplish a prayer.’ The heart was in the work. It was the great object to which pious lives, generation after generation, were devoted. Faith was the architect, and every stone was raised by an act of sacrifice. We are more wealthy and more skilful; but we are not capable of such works now, for the world has greater hold on our minds.”


“True,” mused Damer; “with all our advantages, their heaven was nearer to the earth than ours.”

“What do you say of these stiff old figures,” cried Tremore, “which remind one of the family pieces by Holbein in Hampton Court, but which appear more grotesque, with ruff and buckram carved in stone, than portrayed on canvass?”

“Ah!” exclaimed Geraldine, “in verity, those figures look odd after the theatrical graces of Chantrey and Lawrence. But,

from being accustomed to them perhaps, these monuments seem to me so far from ridiculous, that I recognise in them a grave dignity, and a simple and affectionate character, which I cannot find in the more polished works of modern sculpture. Look at this family grouped together in attitudes of prayer, as if loth to lose their connection in the grave. The husband and wife with hands fast clasped—emblem of that union of spirit which death itself could not unchain—are reverently kneeling together beside the raised altar, on which are sculptured the figures of their young children. The date is obliterated, but the costume indicates the age of Elizabeth. With what voice do these tombs speak, Damer?"

"To my mind, they speak of a later and happier era in our history than the effigies of warrior and priest—an era of greater tranquillity, when the sword and the crosier were subordinated to the power of the law, and all the charities and affections of household life had free scope for their growth—an era when ambition became restrained by duty, when the quiet virtue of a well-spent life was thought worthy applause and commemoration. Then—with the open Gospel



before them, and a better perception of its meaning, and a finer feeling of humanity—men were no longer duped by the baleful lustre of glittering arms, nor by the specious sanctity of cloistered austerities, but discerned in the gentle influences and peaceful affections of home, a meet training for a higher state of being. It was then that our social character assumed strength and consistence, and that we became emphatically a home-loving people.”

“Yet observe,” said Geraldine, “the original of these effigies often rose to eminence. This one was a judge, that other an ambassador, and beyond are the tombs of a knight and an admiral. They returned when they had won a place in the world’s respect—Shakespeare did so, too—to end their days in their native place, and to mingle their dust with the ashes of their fathers.”

One of the windows near the roof was open, and at the moment the song of a lark, clear and perfect in every note, came thrilling through it.

“That music,” said Damer, “points the moral to your remark—

‘Type of the wise, who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.’”

“Geraldine! Geraldine!” cried Lady Glarvare. “Oh, you are there, truant! intent on those old monuments. Come and tell us the history of this font; and then you must go up with Mr. Tremore to the tower, and show him the relics preserved there, while we walk on towards the observatory.”

CHAPTER XII.

Our Polly is a sad slut,
She minds not what we taught her;
I wonder any man alive
Should ever have a daughter ;
For when she's drest all in her best,
So tempting, fine, and gay,
As men should serve a cucumber,
She throws herself away.

GAY.

THE party in the observatory was a very gay one. The Seltzer water was deliciously iced; the champagne (Tremore acknowledged his partiality for the exhilarating beverage) was of Moet's finest quality; the Rhenish wines had been laid down by my lord's father. The luncheon was excellent, but without pretence, and served in the careless pic-nic style which gives a higher relish to repasts of this kind, by enabling each individual to consult his particular taste, and to gratify it to the utmost without fear of observation from his neighbour. As plates

were short, and all ceremony was dispensed with, the General made no apology for unroofing a *paté-de-foie gras*, and keeping it at his side while he helped himself to the choicest morsels; the worthy Bishop of Maidstone, who had joined the party, was equally fortunate with a capital lobster salad; and, as all the tempting viands which make up a luxurious luncheon had been provided in abundance, no one cared to disturb them in the enjoyment of their favourite dishes. It is certainly difficult to avoid entertaining a good opinion of the host who hospitably entertains you at "a well-furnished table." Many a man despised abroad appears very estimable at home, surrounded by his family, and intent on the gratification of his guests. When there is a question of worth and character, a dinner will often decide it. More people than honest Sosia, are ready to confess, that—

"Le véritable Amphitryon
Est l'Amphitryon où l'on dîne."

The bishop, as he rose from the board, declared he had never been so interested in Lord Glarvale's conversation before; and he forthwith went to her ladyship to offer his

gratulations on the happy event which he understood was about to take place in her family.

The delighted lady affected an air of indifference. She knew nothing of it, she said. It was best for young people to manage those affairs by themselves. The more the natural feelings of the heart were consulted, the more likely were marriages to turn out happily. It was not the first time she had heard the report, and, of course, she could not be ignorant of the marked attentions Mr. Tremore paid Geraldine. But she begged her dear bishop would give no countenance to those rumours. There was no knowing what difficulties might spring up in the progress of such affairs, and it was much better to prevent their being talked about until every thing was settled. Thus, with apparent carelessness, she strengthened the impression on the good prelate's mind, while she pretended a wish to remove it. And he, who had just sent his son to the continent in disgrace, for having dared to conceive an attachment for the daughter of a naval captain, applauded her ladyship's disinterested sentiments, and discoursed with warmth, under the influence

of the generous wines he had imbibed, on the nothingness of earthly distinctions and worldly vanities, revolving in his mind all the while the advantages which must accrue to the Glarvales from the splendid alliance Lady Geraldine was about to form, and resolving that he would cultivate a closer acquaintance with that estimable family than had formerly seemed to him at all desirable.

The lady, to do her justice, believed she had some ground for encouraging the notion of Tremore's pretensions to her daughter's hand. She had noticed the flushed and anxious look of Geraldine when she met her with Florian that morning, and she believed it proceeded from some declaration on his part. She felt secure in the pride of her daughter, and entertained no doubt that she would, at whatever sacrifice of feeling, accept a proposal from a person so eminently desirable.

Her agreeable meditations were partly disturbed by the rude clatter of the General's tongue.

"Capital glasses here! Dollonds', I vow! Can just get a view over the farthest hills, and see the channel looking like a light

cloud. Though I say it, there's not a man in England has got a better eye for a telescope; I could always make out the enemy before they were visible to any one else."

The warrior did not boast in this instance without reasonable cause. From keeping so keen a look-out for the foe, that he might never, as he said, be prematurely hurried into action, his sense of vision had become preternaturally acute. Seated at his ease before the instrument, he swept the horizon with it, and then adjusted it to a nearer range.

"By Jove! there's often prime fun with a glass like this, as Ibrahim Pasha once confessed to me."

"On what occasion was that, pray?" asked the bland bishop.

"Why, it was when Ibrahim was at the head of an Egyptian force, sent out against some rebellious Arabs. The dogs pretended that they had no money to pay the taxes, and old Mehemet had a short way of dealing with defaulters. He told his son to go and ravage their country, burn their villages, shoot one man out of every ten, and bring in the rest as slaves."

"Ah, the poor heathen!" blandly exclaimed the bishop.

"One day towards evening, Ibrahim came in view of the rebel camp, pitched some distance on the other side of a river, where he couldn't get at them. By aid of a good glass, one of this sort, he could see the rebels enjoying themselves finely. Ibrahim foamed at the mouth with rage. He ordered some guns to be fired, but the shot fell so wide that the rebels laughed at them. Now, an English officer who had joined the expedition for the fun of the thing, requested his highness' leave to try his hand at a shot. A huge mortar was brought up; he loaded and pointed it himself. 'Now,' says he, 'I beg your highness to notice that party there, with some dancing-girls before them; there are the chiefs you see, and very happy they look, lolling about, with all their women round them, and their supper spread out at their feet. Just watch them now.' With that the match was applied; the monster of a shell went whizzing through the air, and pitched in the very centre of the merry-makers. To see the scrambling and tumbling over one another, which ensued in an instant, was prime sport for Ibrahim. But

there was better behind. Before the farthest of the poor devils was a dozen yards off, the shell burst, and—whew!—away went the fugitives, as if a mine had burst under their feet. There was no more merry-making in their camp that night, you may be sure!”

“And how came this to your knowledge, General?” asked the bishop.

“To my knowledge? Phoo! I pointed the mortar myself.”

“Your sport is really very shocking!” said the mild bishop, reprovingly. “Yet I suppose we must be thankful to your profession for the peaceful security of scenes like this. Let us be thankful that we can enjoy the fleeting pleasures of the hour, without dread of bombshells. There is no chance of being disturbed by any explosion here, I think,” and he complacently gazed on the smiling faces around him.

That General is certainly an intolerable bore, thought her ladyship, but he’s of inestimable use just now. He sees nothing himself, and he helps to blind others. It’s very lucky we thought of him. I daresay Florian is with Geraldine again. I don’t see either of them.

The General had resumed his place at the

glass; but suddenly he attracted attention again, by roaring aloud with laughter.

"On my life now, this is curious—this is extraordinary!" he cried, in a paroxysm of chuckling. "Positively, the most amusing thing I ever saw!"

"What's the matter?" exclaimed half a dozen different voices, eager to know what could have caused this unexpected burst of merriment.

"By Jove! it's too rich (another roar). You must excuse me, Lady Glarvale, for mentioning it. The fun's too good to be lost. In that little copse yonder—you can just see the green patch with your eye—there's a girl, as fine as hands and pins can make her—your pardon, bishop—seated almost in the lap of a brisk young fellow, who's making love to her with all his might. I daresay he's your poacher, Lord Glarvale!"

"Really this is a most extraordinary affair! Under my very nose, I may say. Haugh—whaugh—whaugh—haugh—agh—agh! Are you quite sure you are right, General?"

"Right! why, I can see them as plainly as I can see you. Stop! I'll tell you what

'the wench is dressed in. Buff-muslin gown, flounced up to her hips—white lace mantilla—blue bonnet—grey parasol, with pink fringe. Just such things as Lady Geraldine has on now."

"It's her maid, I'll be bound!" cried Lady Glarvale, angrily. "The impudent minx!"

"No doubt, no doubt!" said the General; "and uncommonly like her mistress the jade has contrived to make herself look. Just her height, too!"

"Then it cannot be Janet, for she's extremely *petite*. Let me see, General."

"Ho! ho! ho!" roared the General. "The fellow's grown a little bolder. She's pretending to cry, I protest, and he's caught her in his arms. One, two, three, such busses! I wonder we don't hear the report here. We should with an ear-trumpet. Ha, ha! ha, ha! He's a proper lad; as much like that Bellstar we were talking of the other day as one pea is like its fellow. I do believe 'tis he, too!"

"Let me see!" screamed Lady Glarvale.

By this time every glass in the observatory was directed to the spot.

"No, no, no!" roared the General, "we

had better all come away at once. Ha, ha! ha, ha!"

"It is certainly a very surprising thing," gravely observed his lordship, "that, with a comparatively small tube like this, we should be able to pierce through so great a space, and see the actions of people who are invisible to the naked eye, and who must believe themselves completely screened from observation. Haugh! haugh! I am determined to have those creatures apprehended, and punished as severely as the law will allow. Haugh-whaugh-whaugh-whaugh!"

Lady Glarvale trembled with feelings of apprehension and alarm she could not understand. Without ceremony she pushed the roaring General from his seat, applied the glass to her eye, and gazed through it for a few moments with intense and aching vision. Her face was pallid as death when, turning round, but leaning on the instrument for support, all self-possession lost in the agony of the moment—hoping against the evidence of sight to find her daughter near her—she exclaimed in a trembling voice—

"WHERE'S GERALDINE?"

Tremore entered the observatory at this moment.

"She walked with Damer and myself part of the way from the church," he said, "but left us at the path winding down to the beech-wood copse, saying she had a call to make that way."

Not another word was spoken. Stealthily and silently the guests moved away, rightly thinking that was no time for further explanation.

"All the butter's out of the stirabout now, at any rate!" said the general to the bishop. "Confound it! if it had happened on Thursday, 'twould have been nothing to me; for I was going then. Now, I must order my fellow to pack up, and be at the deuce and all of expense, and go the devil knows where all of a sudden!"

"I am very sorry I accepted their invitation," observed the humane bishop, "but they teased me into it. I pity them—yes, I pity them from the bottom of my heart; though I am glad that that amiable young gentleman, Mr. Florian, has escaped. I shall ask him if he would like to take a seat in my chariot, and sleep with me at Iver palace to-night."

The good-natured prelate knew that he should find three of his accomplished

daughters and their amiable mamma at home.

Lady Glarvale had buried her face in her hands to hide its burning glow, and to shut all things from her sight. When she removed them, she found herself alone with the viscount.

“Unhappy girl! Pray God she is married to him!” was all she had strength to utter.

CHAPTER XIII.

•
Hear the truth of it,
You would have married her most shamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The offence is holy that she hath committed:
And this deceit loses the name of craft,
Of disobedience or unduteous title;
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

SHAKSPEARE.

WITH a flushed face and excited air, Geraldine was hastening home when she was met by Damer. She accosted him hurriedly; told him she had seen Bellstar; that he was in deep distress on her account; and thought it useless to conceal their marriage longer.

“I can no longer bear this life of deceit!” she exclaimed; “it is intolerable to me. I knew not the torture I should suffer when I urged this marriage on him. Then my heart was hopeful, and my spirit high; now they are nearly broken. To-night I will tell

mamma every thing, though I die at her feet with shame and sorrow."

"Ah!" Damer answered, "it is well you are prepared for the worst. Concealment is no longer possible. You have been observed. It is needless to tell you how. Hasten to Lady Glarvale; I will go and find Bellstar. He must come to support and to claim you."

"You alarm me! Stay—one moment. My father—does he know it?"

"He does; you must be prepared for his anger. You have erred; it is fit now you should be humble. Go as a penitent, and throw yourself wholly on their mercy and love."

"You do not know him," she replied with a shudder. "He is unforgiving. Kind Heaven! that any mortal should be so. The dread of this hour has weighed upon me lately night and day."

"I can believe it. You must prepare yourself for a harsh reception. Whatever its results may be, you shall not want friends. I have written to Smith, entreating him to come down here. He must assist you."

"Alas! I fear he is too prudent to connect himself with our misfortunes. Has he answered you?"

"No ; but I do not doubt that he will come. Though his friendship is prudent, it is still friendship. Bellstar can do nothing without his aid."

"There is Florian ! He has a noble heart ! Often I have been on the point of disclosing myself to him ; but some scruples of shame, and the fear of embarrassing him, restrained me. Now I must have no scruples. I must assist my husband as I best can."

"Assuredly ; I will invite him to meet Bellstar. Hush ! here are persons advancing this way. Take the other walk. May your good angel keep close to you now !"

Geraldine hoped to reach her mother's room unobserved, but there were too many anxious eyes on the watch for her to do so. With a trembling heart she gained the door. When, after a few moments of irresolution, she opened it, she found, to her dismay, that the room was empty. Before she had time to collect herself, a servant announced that Lord Glarvale expected her in his study.

She obeyed the message with that apathetic sense which a conviction of necessity inspires. Her confusion was the greater, that she had been used, even at home, rather to exert authority than submit to it. Her

father's understanding had inspired her with no respect; and often she had successfully resisted his attempts to exercise any restraint over her. But now she felt that she was defenceless before him, and that she was lost indeed, if she could not move him to pity. As she entered the library, she observed that Lady Glarvale was by his side, and thence she conceived some hope of intercession.

She did not wait for question, but with downcast eyes, and in an attitude of penitence, avowed that she had a great fault to acknowledge, for which she knew not how to beg forgiveness. She was the wife of Bellstar, who had long possessed her love. Their attachment had been kept secret, in the hope that he might soon obtain a position which might render him, in their eyes, a proper suitor for her hand. They knew not how often his reasonable expectations had been disappointed. He was the most generous—the least selfish—of men. (Lord Glarvale smiled sourly at this, but unnoticed by Geraldine.) Often he had told her that he would fetter her with no engagement—that he was prepared to resign her though never afterward should he know peace.

“And at last,” she continued, “it was I

who suggested this hazardous step, thinking only of the distraction of my heart—it was I who urged him to it, fearing lest longer delay, amid the perils which surrounded me, should prove the shipwreck of my hopes and honour.”

“Of your honour, Geraldine!” exclaimed Lady Glarvale; “you forget yourself, girl!”

“Of my honour pledged to him; and not lightly pledged, for it was renewed with every new care which clouded him. How could I have kept my honour had I broken my promise?”

“These are foolish notions, which no one regards,” said her ladyship. “A young lady’s promise, without the consent of her parents, is nothing; it is better broken than kept.”

“I could not think so. My conscience told me I was his wife from the day our vows were exchanged; and I dreaded lest some accident should separate us before our union could show a legal title. Forgive me, I must tell you every thing. Of late, I began to doubt the firmness of my own resolution. I knew your wishes; should I be able to resist them much longer? The attentions paid to me at first by this brilliant stranger

troubled me more than I can tell. Might I not be dazzled by his admiration—overcome by your persuasion? New fears possessed me. I shrank with horror from the dark possibility which opened itself to my view, but which each day to my troubled mind seemed to approach nearer. Then I took the resolution of securing my faith—of guarding myself from the chance of unutterable wretchedness, by an irrevocable act. I believe I was right—I think so still—I know I never can repent it; for we are united now beyond any power on earth to separate us. But it was wrong to deceive you; I have suffered bitterly for it. Forgive me this fault—this crime—and you will make me happier a thousand times than though I had all the honours and wealth of the world at my disposal.”

Lady Glarvale did not speak. She felt it was for her husband to reply to this touching appeal.

The Earl prepared himself by a few preliminary haugh-haughts, then said—

“As far as I can understand the case, Geraldine, you have not only married to please yourself, and in defiance of your parents’ wishes, but you have disgraced

MY HOUSE by a secret intrigue; and have thrust yourself on a ruined spendthrift, who seems to have accepted you with some reluctance. Haugh-haugh-haugh! Whaugh-whaugh! After this, you talk of forgiveness, to insult Lady Glarvale and myself still further, I suppose!"

Before his lordship could quite get through his customary crow, a confused noise was heard outside, and Bellstar impetuously entered the room. He clasped Geraldine—pale to fainting—in his arms, and with a hundred endearing expressions endeavoured to soothe and animate her.

"I am not sorry, Sir," resumed his lordship, "that you have arrived in time to hear what I was about to say to that undutiful girl—haugh! whaugh-whaugh-whaugh! and to receive my final determination to regard her as a stranger from this time forth."

With this his lordship crowed and swelled as if he had expressed the most magnanimous sentiment ever uttered.

"For shame, my lord, for shame!" Bellstar exclaimed with indignation, as he tenderly bent over the agitated girl; "have pity on her weakness, though your heart be dead to affection."

Lady Glarvale, in whose breast compassion for her child struggled with vexation and wounded pride, turned angrily on the intruder—

“I am amazed,” she said, “that *you* should presume to appear here, after robbing us of our daughter by a clandestine intrigue.”

“With what intrigue can you charge me, Lady Glarvale? We loved each other; and, rather than see her happiness sacrificed to a miserable ambition, I have made her my wife.”

“So,” she returned with a sneer, “love is her excuse for disobedience, and yours for the meanness of falsehood and deceit! Do not hope to impose on us by such nursery nonsense.”

“I can forgive your anger, Lady Glarvale; against myself it may be just; but your daughter, has she really committed an unpardonable offence in imagining she had a heart, and in following its impulses? See what you do with your children. You amuse them with tales of love in their youth—you teach them languages in the works of poets who sing of it with the rapture of passion—you warm their imagination with music breathing it in every note—you take

them to the opera, where it forms the theme of every story, the action of every scene—you paint it to them, while yet innocent of guile, as the heaven of their existence—the aim of their being—the most beautiful of all pure and holy instincts. Yet, when they venture to act on this belief—to indulge the delightful emotions which move within them—you denounce them as undutiful—scoff at their affection as folly—brand them with shame—and cast from you the love you never lost, and the duty which is still humbly proffered you.”

Lady Glarvale was silent; but her lord began to get his throat in order for a speech. Bellstar anticipated him—

“I know your power,” he continued; “your power to wound where there can be no resistance. But, if you persist in exercising it, it is tyranny and not justice. Speak kindly to her, my lord; you see what she suffers now!”

Geraldine directed an imploring glance to her father; but she might as well have addressed it to the marble chimneypiece.

“To you, Sir,” his lordship began, “I have nothing to say. Your deceit is so dishonourable as to place you beneath my notice.

Haugh! Haugh-haugh-haugh! Whaugh! Whatever pain Geraldine suffers from her connection with you, she has brought on herself. Whaugh-whaugh! I wish her now to mark my last words"——

"She shall not hear them!" Bellstar exclaimed impetuously, as he caught her tenderly in his arms, and rushed towards the door, through which Lady Glarvale was already passing. But Geraldine, struggling, loosed herself from his grasp, and fell at her ladyship's feet.

"Mother! dear mother! You will break my heart if you leave me thus! For mercy's sake, one kind word—but one!"

The holy instinct of motherhood swelled Lady Glarvale's breast, and moistened her eye. Her pride and wrath struggled with it for an instant, and then yielded to its power.

"God bless you, my child!" she said with tearful eyes; "may you be happy still—as happy as I wish you!"

The viscount crowed with astonishment until he was red in the face. By the time he was once more ready with his last words, the room was empty, and Bellstar, supporting Geraldine, had passed from the house.

“Dearest Geraldine!” he exclaimed, “you cannot tell how grieved I am that I have no home to offer you. I ought to have been better prepared for this mischance.”

“It is of little consequence,” she replied—

“‘The world is all before us, where to choose
Our place of rest, and Providence our guide.’

—at all events, it is from no Eden that we are expelled.”

CHAPTER XIV.

How often do we err in our estimate of human happiness! When I hear of a man who has noble parks, splendid palaces, and every luxury in life, I always enquire whom he has to love; and, if I find he has nobody, or does not love those he has, in the midst of all his grandeur, I pronounce him a being in deep adversity."—ROGERS. (*Notes to Human Life.*)

ON the second day of their departure they were seated in an hotel at Dover. Damer, with kind thoughtfulness, had taken all their arrangements on himself. He proposed that they should pass some weeks in one of the little towns on the coast of Normandy, "where," he said, "you can be secure from interruption until gossips have done with your story, and where you will be able to live economically—a point of some importance now, I suppose, while you are forming your plans for the future."

Bellstar coloured, and took his friend aside—

"At present," he said, "I am almost des-

titute. You are the only man I know, to whom I could make this avowal without shame."

"Fortunately, I am rich enough at this moment to be your banker. My publisher has been unexpectedly liberal. You know the proverb, 'Gli amici legono la borsa, con un filo di ragnatelo.'"

A mutual pressure of the hand satisfied both parties, and they returned to Geraldine to talk over the various projects which her sanguine husband had sketched out to commence the world anew. He was for abandoning all his past pursuits, and for engaging in active life.

"I feel now," he said, with a grave face, "all the cares and responsibilities of a family man. I will be an idler no longer. I have commercial friends, who, I should think, would get me into a bank or established house of business—where in time I might become as rich as Laneton, and as distinguished as Ashburton. I will no longer have an inclination apart from what I feel to be my duty. I have been amused by trifles too long. Why that grave smile, Damer?"

"There is a Shakspeare on that shelf behind you; reach it me, and I will tell you.

Ah! here is the passage I want—it is Hamlet's resolve, after he has heard from the 'poor ghost' the story of his father's wrongs. Geraldine is the best reader."

She took the volume, and read the passage—

"Remember thee!

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter."

"A solemn resolve," said Damer, "and prompted, surely, by a sufficient motive. Now, mark how it is kept."

Obeying his direction, Geraldine read again—

"O, villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables—meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile and smile, and be a villain;
At least, I am sure it may be so in Denmark.

[Writing.]

So, uncle, there you are!"

"That is the point!" exclaimed Damer—

"'My tables—meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile and smile, and be a villain;—
So, uncle, there you are!'

No sooner, you see, does a reflection cross

his meditative mind which seems to him note-worthy, than, forgetting his resolve to banish from his mind

‘All trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,’

that the great commandment might live alone in his mind, ‘unmixed with baser matter,’—than he yields to the power of mental habit, draws out his tablets, adds one more saw to the store which he had sworn to renounce, and is pleased that his uncle’s villainy has furnished him with the ground-work of a philosophic reflection.”

Bellstar laughed good-humouredly, as he said—

“You mean me to apply this to myself, I suppose; and to hint that I have in my disposition, something of the noble Dane’s infirmity of purpose. Well, I can admire your illustration of his character, though directed against myself.”

“There is a profound moral in the passage,” observed Damer. “Why is Hamlet a tragedy?”

“Is not Goëthe right in his criticism,” said Geraldine, “that the misery of Hamlet arises from the part assigned him being in

opposition to his natural character? Had he possessed the spirit of a soldier instead of a student, he would have slain his father's murderer without remorse, placed his mother in a convent, ascended the throne, married Ophelia, have beaten back young Fortinbras, and have reigned the prosperous sovereign of Denmark."

"True," returned Dainer, "that opposition between character and the combination of circumstances which we term destiny, is one great source of dramatic power, and in the drama of domestic life is continually leading to tragic results. Hamlet could have been 'contented in a nutshell;' all his desires turned to the cloistered silence of the university. He was unfortunate in having the part for which he was unfitted thrust upon him. Generally, a man is happy just in the degree that his pursuits accord with his tastes and his disposition. We must not permit you, Godfrey, to make a choice from an impulse of duty, which would end in vexation and disappointment. Experiments in such cases are too dangerous to be needlessly tried; for with every new failure a man forfeits a portion of that energy and confidence which are his best possession,

until he loses at last all trust in himself, and all hope of success, and sinks into a tool and a drudge. Besides, were your transformation ever so complete, you would find no one to believe it. Your appearance in the back parlour of Glynn's or Coutts' would be the signal for a run on the bank. Your character in the estimation of society is already fixed. You may exalt the reputation you possess, but, believe me, you will never be able to change it."

Geraldine's expressive eyes beamed with gratitude to Damer.

"You see," she said to Bellstar, "that you must direct your mind to some other road of preferment than commerce. Why not adopt art, in which you have made so great proficiency, as a profession? Fortunately, in our day, it is both honourable and lucrative."

Bellstar shook his head ruefully.

"I have tried it, and discovered my own weakness. I could not be content with mediocrity, nor prettiness; and excellence is above my grasp. In those trifles of mine which were most admired, my judgment went constantly in advance of my performance, and that discouraged me. How I

envied those artists who could fall into raptures with their own works, and discover beauties in their very defects! I fell into the opposite extreme, and scarcely dared to look on any piece which I had once finished. You, who were in my secret, know it was so, Damer."

"Yes! and while I encouraged you to persevere, because I knew that action must strengthen your mind, I felt that you were too fastidious ever to succeed—that if left to yourself you would correct and remodel until your original design was lost sight of, and nothing was left but a collection of pretinences, from which you would recoil yourself, wearied and dispirited."

"Yet, do not discourage me too much, Damer. Something I must do, that is clear; but you will presently make out that I am fit for nothing."

"So far from it that I have already assigned you a profession, and been endeavouring to obtain you preferment in it. You were educated for the church before you were suddenly enriched—your disposition and your talents fit you for it. Why not, then, make up your mind to enter it? Your friends, if inclined to serve you, can serve you

more effectually in that way than in any other. If you miss the opportunity of high distinction, you will also avoid the chance of failure, which to your temper would be mortifying in the extreme. You will be preserved from those struggles which you are ill calculated to sustain, and in which, from the generosity and openness of your nature, you would almost certainly be defeated. I speak to you with the sincerity of friendship. I am sure your happiness must consist much more in freedom from crosses and distractions, than in opportunities of exertion and the contests of rivalry. To succeed in the world, you should have been formed of sterner stuff."

"Do you know," Bellstar replied, "that on this point you are in opposition to a philosopher of great sagacity, and some worldly experience? Paley, I mean. He would correct character by assigning to persons different pursuits from those they are most inclined to. The licentious he would bring up to some country occupation; the sottish and mercenary to liberal professions, and the life of towns; the proud and passionate to an obscure station. It is wrong, he says, to make a crafty lad an attorney, or

to send a quarrelsome youth into the army. On the same principle, he would have sent me to a place in the customs, and have shipped you, Frank, on board of a man-of-war."

"And so would have made us miserable and useless, even had we escaped disgrace. I very much doubt whether natural inclinations, even when we consider them faulty, are to be cured by such discipline. The crafty lad may make a very able lawyer; and, as the profession consists in the perception of subtleties and of nice distinctions, may rise to honour, while as a country gentleman, he might be driven from the race-course with ignominy as a black-leg. Chatham, condemned to pine in an university, might have been a morose theologian, instead of the greatest statesman in Europe; and Nelson, as an artist, would most likely have been as unfortunate as Barry or Haydon."

"Indeed, Godfrey," cried Geraldine, "I think you would be incomparably happier in the church than in any other profession. Why should you hesitate to enter it? You cannot, I am sure, have any conscientious scruples."

"No; but may I not, with reason, scruple to take you from the society you are born to

adorn, and sink you into a Mrs. Primrose, with nothing to occupy you but the charge of children, and the duties of careful housewifery? I really think I should die with vexation to see you in a woollen apron, with a bunch of keys at your girdle, serving out soap and candles, and scolding scullery girls. You are mistaken if you think you could be long contented with such a station."

"Ah!" she replied, "you do not yet understand a woman's heart. Her happiness is in her affections. Can you think that, when I joined my fate with yours, I did not look into the future? That I did not contemplate, I will not say the possibility, but the certainty, of difficulties, of privations, of self-exertion—yes, dear Godfrey—and, if need were, of self-sacrifice too? If I know any thing of myself, I shall the more readily be contented with any decent station which affords us competence, from having seen the hollowness of a more showy existence, and the uneasiness which lurks hidden beneath its spangles."

Bellstar regarded her with a look in which admiration was mingled with a kind of rueful anxiety.

"I must not contradict you, Geraldine;

yet you know it is easy to talk of the comfort of linsey-woolsey in a robe of *soie glacé*."

She wore a charming walking-dress of light silk, over which the eye of Bellstar wandered with the pleasure an artistic taste always feels in graceful elegance.

"Now, if I were a heroine of romance," she said, smiling, "I should tear this dress in ribbons from my figure, to show you how little I regarded it. But as I am only an affectionate wife, with notions of economy dawning on my mind, I will from this day forth put it by among my treasures, to be worn only when I am invited to dinner by the squire, or go as a rare treat to the musical festival, or the county ball. And yet I will almost venture to engage that you shall like me as well, Godfrey, in a Swiss print, or a plain merino, as in any dress I ever wore at a court ball."

"Never doubt it, never doubt it!" he answered, vanquished by her affectionate good sense; "you shall make me what you please. Now, Frank, let us hear what are my chances of ecclesiastical preferment?"

"Before I left Hurst-place, I took occasion to speak to Florian, having heard that a valuable living had just dropped into his gift.

I could have no doubt of his disposition to serve you; and, as he exactly knew your circumstances, I urged him to delay any appointment until I had ascertained your inclinations. He met me frankly and kindly; and though, as he knew nothing of the vacancy then, I did not think it proper that he should commit himself by a promise, he gave me to understand that he should have infinite pleasure in offering the living for your acceptance."

"Then, perhaps, this letter is from him," said Geraldine. "It came under cover to Bellstar this morning. I quite forgot to deliver it to you before."

Damer took it with a pleased air, but laid it down sadly after glancing through its contents.

"There are no secrets in it," he remarked; "the excess of his good-nature places him always at the mercy of the most importunate claimant."

The letter ran—

"MY DEAR SIR,—After you parted from me yesterday, I had a long—and to me rather distressing—interview with Lord Glarvale. I never saw any one more completely cut

up. I pass over what related to myself merely. To lessen his chagrin, I mentioned the probability of our friend Bellstar entering the church, and the likelihood there was that he would do well—stating that I proposed to offer him a living which had just fallen into my gift, worth at least £1,000 a year. On this, his lordship entered into some confidential disclosures with me. His son, as I knew already, was in the diplomatic service. Though he considered he had some claims on the government, yet he found it much easier to press those claims when he had something like an equivalent to offer. In short, he said, that if I placed this living at *his* disposal, I should be conferring on him just then an inestimable obligation; and he entered into some particulars to convince me of this, which I do not think proper to repeat. Under all the circumstances, I found it impossible to refuse his lordship this trifling favour; and the more especially as I hope soon to have it in my power to serve Mr. Bellstar much more effectually. Pray, let me know his address, and remember me most kindly both to him and Lady Geraldine. I hope they will not deny me the pleasure of affording them any assistance in my power,

as I really entertain the warmest regard for them both, and am very desirous of offering them my congratulations on their union.

“Could you delicately hint to them, that Glengairn Castle is quite at their disposal, for as long a time as they may choose to reside there; or, if they should prefer the south, I should feel equally gratified by their staying at Emsworth?—My dear Sir, most truly yours,

“FLORIAN TREMORE.”

“*P.S.*—Is there nothing in which I could gratify you personally? Your friends—and permit me to rank myself among the number—are impatient of your seclusion, and would gladly see your talents employed in some station which, if not worthy of them, would at least allow their lustre to be perceived.”

The long lashes of Geraldine’s eye drooped, and some tears fell from beneath them.

“What a generous fellow Florian is!” exclaimed Bellstar. “I don’t wonder at his yielding the point. But I am provoked with Lord Glarvale. Whatever animosity he con-

ceived against me, he should have entertained some feeling for Geraldine."

Damer took him aside.

"You see how deeply hurt she is," he said; "do not say a word to aggravate her grief. The wound will heal in time; but it must not be touched. Lord Glarvale is not worth your resentment. Natures like his are dead to feeling. The ambitious may relent, the passionate may forgive, but the coldly-selfish, never touched by any strong emotion, carry their petty animosities with them to the grave, and are incapable of forgiveness, not from the strength of their passions, but from the narrowness of their heart, and the weakness of their understanding."

At this moment the door was opened, and a servant announced—Mr. John Smith.

CHAPTER XV.

The right knack of living resembles wrestling more than dancing; for here a man does not know his movement and his measures beforehand. No; he is obliged to stand strong against chance, and secure himself, as occasion shall offer.—MARCUS ANTONIUS.

THERE was something in the face of Smith which always promoted good-humour, and inspired hope. The cheerful, open expression of his ruddy features, and the constant sunshine which lighted them up, giving them a look of confirmed good temper, were an antidote to any feeling of sadness or dejection. It has been remarked that melancholy sentiments have so great a predominance over joyful ones, that a whole party of merry-makers would be chilled by the presence of one real mourner, and, in spite of themselves, acknowledge the influence of his grief. But, so genial was the humour of Smith—so thoroughly sociable his spirit, and bright his temper—that he was more

likely to bring a party of mourners to his mood than they to convert him to theirs. It was not that he wanted feeling—for he sympathized, in his way, with sorrow wherever he met with it; but it was, that he was gifted with a buoyant and happy temperament, which defied and repelled all depressing tendencies, and which was so innate and natural, that it communicated a portion of its exhilarating influence to others, as surely as fire warmed or wine cheered them.

His congratulations to Bellstar and Geraldine were warm and sincere. He treated their secret marriage as a pretty piece of comedy, laughed at Lord Glarvale's wrath, and vowed he would bring him into a conciliatory humour the first time he saw him. Half in jest and half in earnest, he protested that Godfrey had got the start of him, as he had very serious thoughts of proposing to Geraldine himself. The truth is, Smith did admire her very much—a great deal more than any woman he knew; but when he considered that she could not possibly have a shilling, he found so many objections to marriage that he quite abandoned the idea.

He had just concluded his annual sheep sale, and had netted something over £9,000.

for his Leicesters. There was a little stream ran through an estate he had just purchased, which he had contrived to enlarge so that it became answerable for the purposes of a manufacturer, who had taken a lease of some favourable ground at a high rental, and had erected on it mills and a whole town of cottages.

“A rather singular thing happened to me as I passed through London,” he said. “You must know that, for my own use, I have been accustomed to make notes of my agricultural experience. During that week of sultry weather, when it was almost impossible to get out, I threw the notes together, and stopping at Markwell’s in Albermarle street, close to Murray’s, I called in there and left him my manuscript. He was delighted with it, wrote me a cheque for a thousand pounds on the spot for the copy-right, and has begged me to write two or three articles for the Quarterly at a hundred guineas each. So, what have you to be afraid of, Godfrey, with your talents? My dear fellow, there is nothing easier in life than to make money. In this country you have but to hold out your hand, and gold drops into it.”

"But, Mr. Smith!" exclaimed Geraldine, "I thought you were to be ruined when the corn-laws were repealed. At how many agricultural meetings did you take the chair? No one was louder in prophecies of ruin than yourself."

"To be sure. Prophecies make an impression at meetings, and no one cares to remember them afterwards. If you do take up a cause, you should throw your heart into it. My opinions haven't changed in the least. It was most iniquitous work. I know numbers of worthy people who have either sunk already under its operation or are fast sinking. As it happened, I was fortunately situated. My estates were unencumbered. I could do as I pleased with them, and I made great changes to suit the altered circumstances. I don't know that I shall lose any thing; perhaps I shall gain in the long run—I believe I shall. But it is absurd to suppose that others could act like me. You were broken down by the change, Godfrey, and thousands of others suffered in the same manner."

"That is what I cannot, for the life of me, understand," returned Bellstar. "Every thing seems to bring you good, and me bad

fortune. You began life with a property which seemed hopelessly encumbered ; and people now talk of you as one of the greatest proprietors of the midland counties. I succeeded unexpectedly to a splendid rent-roll, with large funded property, and now have not a guinea I can call my own. How *do* you account for it ?”

“Gad ! I don’t know. People would say, I suppose, that I was thrifty and you were extravagant. Yet I never denied myself a pleasure I felt inclined to ; while you have been continually tormented by desires you refused on principle to gratify. How is it, Damer ?”

But Damer had left the room some moments before. He had descried a packet approaching, and had gone to the harbour, expecting news from the Continent.

“Are you, who are so fortunate, never afraid of the fate of Polycrates ?” asked Geraldine. “I see you have a diamond on your finger. Let me persuade you to cast it into the sea.”

“No, no ! I am obliged to you,” he replied quickly ; “I am not at all afraid of losing my friends by being too prosperous. Besides, I never play tricks with fortune. She’s too slip-

"But, Mr. Smith!" exclaimed e after
 "I thought you were to be r t Poly-
 corn-laws were repealed. ccustom-
 agricultural meetings did y relates."
 No one was louder in pr constancy of
 yourself." recollect the old

"To be sure. P an felix!"
 pression at meetir displayed two rows of
 remember them r , and even, as ever den-
 up a cause, you glass-case at his door, as a
 it. My opin' customers.

least. It is not my rule; I have no notion of
 know nur long for happiness. I snatch mine
 either s and when I can find it; or, rather, I
 are fas it thankfully as it comes to me, for I
 nate! take the trouble of looking after it.
 ber we must come to the matter in hand at
 a Godfrey. I must be in town by three,
 to meet some railway people. They want a
 branch line through my Marston property.
 I'm very frank with them. If they make it
 worth my while I'll aid them; if not, I'll get
 up another line, raise the county against
 theirs, and throw them over."

"Was not that the property you bought,"
 enquired Geraldine, "at the time you de-
 clared land would go out of cultivation, and
 become valueless?"

“I am a merciless questioner, and I shall answer you any more. The place was very large; there were few timid. I didn’t like to see my money lost, not knowing what I had done with my money; for you’ll recollect I had the funds couldn’t stand when they were as worthless, and that we should all be ruined together, manufacturers and all. So I thought I might just as well stand by the soil. As it happens, the speculation’s turned out very well. I expect, one way or another, to get my money returned in two or three years, and have the place for nothing, with the advantage of a railway right through it, too—no small advantage, I can tell you. Now, Godfrey, what am I to do for you?”

Bellstar candidly explained his necessities, his doubts as to the profession he should choose—for some profession he must follow—and his earnest desire to secure a position at once which would give him an income, and free him from the anxieties which at present tormented him. His fine features, naturally pensive, yet tranquil in their expression, were clouded with a deeper shade of uneasiness than had perhaps ever over-

came them before, as he spoke of the uncertainty which hung over his future course, and the new feelings at once of hope and of fear—of tender joy and lively apprehension—which had birth in his breast. Smith listened with a bent brow when he spoke of his necessities, but seemed relieved when he added that a loan from Damer had put him in funds for the moment.

“You know,” he observed, “that I would do any thing in reason to serve you. But the fact is, that I have been obliged to disburse a very large sum on your account already. I am looking to your ultimate good. I mustn’t sacrifice your property. I never in my life failed to sell well by biding my time. Some day or other I’ll make a fine thing of your estates. But that may be years off, and I shall have to get them in good order in the mean time. I’ll tell you candidly, I shouldn’t like to part with more ready money. So I quite agree with you, that you must do something for yourself.”

Geraldine listened with a feeling almost of dismay. She had counted more than she had ventured to express on the sympathy and aid of Smith, well knowing his power to assist them. But as he spoke, her hopes

melted away, and their destitution struck her more forcibly than at any former time.

“Alas!” she thought, “of what avail is it to speak to us of the future, and of the advantages to be expected years hence, when we have to make provision for the pressing necessities of the hour? What mockery to tell a famishing wretch that he shall fare luxuriously to the end of his days, if he will bear with his hunger a week longer?”

Her indignation was natural; but was it just? Men of Smith's temperament always think the present of little account in comparison of the future. They regard property as having a life of its own—as being the better part of a man; and they think that it must be saved whatever becomes of the individual himself. If they can see the estate recovering, they have little sympathy for the distress of the owner. They consider they are rendering the greatest service to him by denying relief to his necessities, that his affairs may benefit the more rapidly by their frugality. Smith was a very worthy man, and a very good-natured one; moreover, he had a sincere regard for both Bellstar and Geraldine, and had a hearty desire to serve

them; but he looked quite over their heads. Thinking so much of the future, he lost sight of the present, and was so intent on doing the best for their interest, that he omitted to care for themselves.

Godfrey replied to Smith's closing observation with energy—

“Do something for myself! That is exactly what I want! We were discussing the expediency of my entering the church when you first came in; but is it so certain I could obtain preferment?”

“The church!” returned Smith. “To be sure, the very thing for you, since I find you are too scrupulous or too indolent for any thing else. Let me see. Ah! I could do something for you in that way. I have a Suffolk living in my gift; quite a charming place, near the coast; the church like a cathedral. Small and great tithes together, £800 or £900 a year. Then there are the dues, and thirty acres of capital glebe land, with fine rectory-house. Why, I don't think there's a more desirable benefice in England. You shall have that, if you like.”

Geraldine's conscience now smote her for her injustice. She listened with breathless

attention, while her husband warmly expressed his sense of his friend's kindness.

"Stay, though! I must tell you all. The living is not vacant yet; but the incumbent is nearly eighty, and would be willing to retire on a pension. You would have to allow him half the income for his life."

Godfrey consulted Geraldine by a look.

"Still," she said in answer to his appeal, "the income would be sufficient for our wants; and, as it would be certain, we could easily apportion our expenses to our means."

"There's a little difficulty by the way, yet," Smith continued. "The inventory for such a small place is extensive. The furniture is handsome, and must be taken; and there's some farming stock. I suppose it will cost you a couple of thousand pounds to get in."


Geraldine could no longer restrain her vexation—

"Two thousand pounds, my dear Mr. Smith, and this to us who are penniless! Do not trifle with us longer. You raise our expectations only to disappoint them. It makes one quite miserable to hear you."

She spoke with so much feeling, that

Smith, though surprised she should take any business details so much to heart, was moved to compassion, and promised every thing should be arranged without difficulty, if Godfrey should decide on accepting the offer. He kindly entreated her not to distress herself, and in the warmth of the moment disclosed, what he had intended to keep secret, that he confidently believed Bellstar would have a very handsome surplus left—a small fortune, indeed—after his affairs were wound up.

“But I may as well mention,” he added, “that I am charging five per cent. on my advances, as I never on principle lend money under. And as for that living, Godfrey, you shall have the advowson, if you like. It doesn’t suit me to keep, as I have so many applications about it, and it returns me nothing. Whatever the value may be, I’ll reckon as a new loan. Your rental, I am glad to say, is now sufficient to keep down interest. And, by the by, you must want money to buy many things to start with. (He took a cheque from the *visite* side of his purse.) Not a word, I beg. I ought to have thought of this before. There—I hope that will set you up till you receive your first half-year’s



tithes. It'll take some time to go through all the preliminaries, I suppose."

He placed a cheque for £1000 in Geraldine's hands, then, declining to hear a word of expostulation or of thanks, he looked at his watch, declared his time was up, and, warmly shaking hands with both, hurried away. But, before the train left, he found time to address a note to Bellstar—

"MY DEAR GODFREY,—I shall not do any thing in the matter of the living till I hear that your resolution is fixed. When I have a line from you to that effect, I will arrange terms with the present incumbent.

"The interest on the £1000 and on the incoming valuation, you will perhaps manage to pay out of income, as it is best to keep the two transactions separate.

"Simmons, of Chancery Lane, will be a good man to value the advowson, if you take it. The arrangements can be completed as soon as you decide on the purchase, and it can be made over to you when your estate is rich enough to pay the price.

"I do hope you will have a pleasant trip, and that you will not suffer yourself to be disturbed by any cares concerning the *res*

angustæ domi. I need scarcely say, you may at all times, and in all circumstances, count on the good offices and sincere friendship of, yours ever,

“JOHN SMITH.”

Wishing to escape observation, Bellstar and Geraldine went in a “fly” to meet Damer at the harbour. There was a steamer to sail for Brest that afternoon, and they resolved to proceed in it. They hoped they should be able to persuade their friend to accompany them.

Bellstar was dispirited : he was not satisfied with his interview with Smith ; while Geraldine, on the other hand, was pleased with it, as it had relieved her mind of a load of anxiety, and poured a flood of sunshine on the road she was to travel through life, which had previously appeared wrapped in gloom and peril. When she rallied Godfrey on his dejection, he confessed that he was troubled at the moment with a feeling of discontent.

“It seems to me,” he said, “that I am of no use in the world. Even my best friends desire to see me shelved, and I cannot help contrasting my present dependent state—for

such it is—with the brilliant prospects of my opening years. Then every one spoke highly of my talents, and predicted for me a distinguished career; and when, unexpectedly, I succeeded to a magnificent fortune, the world seemed at my foot. Now, looking back, I find that, while I have yielded to nearly every one with whom I came in contact, no one ever yielded to me. Look at Smith; without effort he gains ascendancy wherever he appears, and is more respected when he refuses than I ever was when I complied. I begin to envy even the meannesses of men who possess the great all-potent talent of success. These bustling people who pass by us, is, each one in his way, more useful and more clever than myself. The smooth obsequious landlord who put our dinner on the table yesterday, is said to be worth a plum; and, on my word, knowing he is so greatly my superior, I feel ashamed to receive the attentions he pays me. It is a mortifying reflection to think that you have been made use of all your life. I wish I could recollect that I had ever got the better of a single being in a single instance, for I think it would comfort me just now. I am grateful to Smith; but I cannot

conceal from myself that he is bent on serving himself while serving me. I wish he had shown a little more disinterestedness."

Partly amused, and partly vexed at this complaint, Geraldine smiled at its conclusion.

"And how do you know," she asked, "that he would have been able to serve you, had he not always looked after his own interests in the first place? He has done for you what no other person was able or was willing to do. Mr. Laneton was once your friend; when he 'assisted' you, it was with the deliberate intention of sacrificing you to his own interests; you had expectations from Cavendish, but he has forgotten you in his last transport of fantasy; there is Florian, with his amiable intentions, ready to promise every thing, and perform nothing; and Damer"——

"Ah! how different the friendship of Damer! He insisted on sharing with me the narrow fund he possessed."

"Generous heart!" she exclaimed, "who can speak too highly of him? I know not whether it be true, as I have somewhere seen, that we cannot feel as much obliged to those who merely endeavour to serve us, as we are

to those who really do serve us. Damer, you see, could not do for us what Smith has done. Do we not find that the generous impulse and the full purse have, like some substances in chemistry, a tendency to fly from each other? Thrift collects—generosity disperses. If Smith had Damer's temper, is it not certain that we should now be lamenting over his want of power, instead of ungraciously criticising his want of will? What reason can we have for discontent? I declare to you that I regard him as a true friend, and that I cannot be sufficiently thankful to Providence for having met with him."

Bellstar sighed; with womanly tenderness she inquired what feeling prompted it.

"You heard him say how much he admired you. Seeing him so happy and prosperous, I almost reproached myself for depriving you of the splendid opportunities which, as Geraldine Glarvale, were always open to you."

Those were the last expressions of discontent she suffered him to utter. She told him, that what he regarded as the faults and defects of his character, were all virtues and beauties in her eyes; that they first won her regard; that some men were formed to be

respected, and others to be admired, and others to be feared, and others to be loved. That the last were always the happiest, if they would be content with the part God assigned them. And then she spoke of their prospects, so delightfully changed within the last hour, and drew so serene and sweet a picture of the life opening to them, that he readily yielded to her mood, and acknowledged with a sage divine, that happiness is to be found in the exercise of the social affections, much more than in worldly distinctions or in any pursuits of ambition.

Their search for Damer was unsuccessful. The packet had arrived, and the crowd dispersed, before they reached the landing-place, and they conjectured that he had returned to the hotel. On their way back, they spoke of the mystery which hung over his movements. With every requisite of happiness, it seemed, by one of those singular contradictions in which fortune delights, that happiness was denied him. Godfrey was eloquent in his praise. His heart was large, his temper serene, his genius as tranquil and smiling as the ocean then at rest; his tastes were not only refined, but well disciplined; his desires moderate; with a rare effort of

virtue he was secluded by choice—a noble example of the truth, that the greatest and purest minds are seldom found in the highest places. Always sincere in his friendships and benevolent in his aims, and, during his visits to town, social in his habits, he seemed to shun sympathy, and to make his heart the sanctuary of an inviolable and settled sadness. The quick intelligence of Geraldine had linked together some hints she had heard, of the events of bygone years, and concluded that he suffered from one of those maladies of the heart, which, far from tainting a fine nature with selfishness or cynicism, rather infuse greater sweetness into all its dispositions. Schiller made the devoted friend of Don Carlos nourish the fatal love the unhappy prince had conceived, from a belief that, though it might pain his heart, it would surely elevate his character.

“ I saw his love

In its first blossom—saw his fatal passion
Take root in his young heart. I had full power
To check it; but I did not. The attachment,
Which seem'd to me not guilty, I still nourish'd.
The world may censure me, but I repent not,
Nor does my heart accuse me. I saw life
Where death appear'd to others. In a flame
So hopeless, I discern'd Hope's golden beam.”

Geraldine said, that as in the natural world,

life of a higher and brighter kind often sprang from death—so in spiritual existence, the passions and the hopes which expired in anguish, might, in their very decay, give birth to higher feelings and more heavenly aspirations.

They found Damer alone on their return, with some open letters in his hands. He was flushed and agitated.

“Excuse me,” he said abruptly; “business of the greatest urgency calls me away. You will write to me from your retirement. I must be gone this instant.”

“One word!” exclaimed Geraldine, as she held his hand fast. “Is this news good or bad!”

“Good! I trust in Heaven’s mercy—good!” he answered fervently. “The gates of Paradise are before me, but I have a vision of pursuing furies swift to prevent my entrance. Farewell!”

The next moment he was gone, leaving them to speculate on the cause which could so strangely have excited him.

CHAPTER XVI.

In a society like our own, the man of money is one of those bastard and insolent powers, which grow out of the affairs of every day, as the mushroom grows out of the dunghill. It is necessary, in truth, that an age should be grossly corrupt, and deeply stained with infamy, when it replaces by money the sword of the warrior; by money, the sentence of the judge; by money, the intelligence of the legislator; by money, the sceptre of the king himself.—JULES JANIN.

THE first person Florian saw on his arrival in London was Mr. Laneton; for it is to be remarked that he had the luck or talent to meet every person at exactly the moment he wished to find him. He came to welcome Tremore back to London, and to transact a little business with him, if he found him in the mood.

He laughed heartily at Geraldine's escape, which he had heard from the General, who had spread it over the town with some embellishments of his own, and he congratulated Florian on his escape from "that intriguing set." The father a bore, the mother

an *intrigante*, the girl a married flirt, and her husband a ruined spendthrift.

"To tell you the truth," said he, "I should have thought it only a friendly office to have put you on your guard against their manœuvres before you left town, but that I had discovered the secret marriage, and so far knew you were safe against their designs. Instead of her parents being angry, I really think they ought to be rejoiced that the girl is out of harm's way. She was much too free and clever to be left to her own discretion."

"You surprise me!" Florian answered; "I had no idea you were in the secret."

"I found it out by accident—at least became morally certain of it; but it was no business of mine to publish my suspicions, so I left it to time to test their truth. No one can be sorry for the mortification of any of the family."

"Well," rejoined Tremore, in a tone of apology, "I must confess I thought them amiable, though, to be sure, his lordship's pomposity was intolerable, and his lady's scheming was a sad drawback to the pleasure of her society. But Lady Geraldine is positively a charming personage. I thought she was a favourite of yours."

"A favourite? Oh, no! She amused me; and as she had the remains of a fashionable reputation, and a good deal of malicious pleasantry, no one cared to offend her. Poor Bellstar! Well, he's done for. No one will ever hear of him again. And Damer, a fellow I never liked—full of sentiment and mystery, living no one knows where or how. His creditors will find *him* out some day, I suppose. They would have had a fine catch in you, had their snares taken effect. They tried hard to get Cavendish, but he broke loose from them. I fear they have done Una some harm. Dear child! I would give the world to see her thoroughly restored to the health and spirits she once possessed."

"How is Miss Laneton? I hope she is not worse?"

"No, not worse, I think, but rather more desponding since you left us. She occasions me the greatest anxiety. I wish to get my worldly affairs settled, but she is a bar to it. *Entre nous*, I have an offer of a coronet, and I only wait her marriage to accept it, and secure it to her issue. She has a pretty fortune of her own; and, as I shall settle all I possess on her, you may suppose the title will not want wealth to support it. She will be de-

lighted to see you again, I know. I really think your society did her good. She says you seemed to understand her, which very few do. Are you engaged for to-morrow? If not, come and dine with us. You will meet Freeborn there. He has been inconsolable for your loss. I really think he's attached to you."

Mr. Laneton rose to take his leave, but recollected, by mere accident, that there was a railway company in one of the southern counties, where Cavendish had large estates, dreadfully in want of funds to complete their line. If Florian would assist them, he would make himself the leading man in the county, and might sit for which division of it he pleased. It was really a fine opening; and, by-the-by, he happened to have some papers in his pocket on the subject, which, perhaps, Tremore would look at, as it would take him but a few moments.

Florian wished to refuse, but, before he could invent an excuse, the man of business had him at a table, engaged in calculations of traffic revenue and net returns. He showed he was a considerable shareholder in it himself; "and you may suppose," he added, "I should not be likely to embark in an

unprofitable, or a very uncertain speculation." It was difficult just then to raise money for such undertakings, however safe they might be. But then, the advantages offered for investment in them were proportionally great. It was doubtful whether such a favourable opportunity might ever present itself again. What did he think of it?

With that he fixed his large and keen grey eyes in earnest scrutiny on the face of Tremore. He wished to see how he would take so magnificent a proposal; for it involved an eventual outlay of more than a hundred thousand pounds, and required a considerable per centage on that sum to be paid down at once.

To Florian there was nothing startling in the scheme. In his fictitious existence, millions were hardly more to him than simple units. The famous Mr. Richard Swiveller found some of the excitement of high gambling, without any of its distress, in playing games of cribbage for imaginary thousands. Florian was so constantly in the habit of hearing his wealth spoken of as unbounded, that he insensibly fell into the illusion without believing in its reality. He

acted and spoke as he saw people expected him to act and speak. It is very doubtful whether Sly the tinker and Abon Hassan believed, the one that he was a lord, the other that he was the caliph Haroun, yet neither refused the parts assigned him. As Mr. Laneton evidently thought the proposal was a reasonable one for him to make, Florian thought it a reasonable one for him to receive. He listened to it, therefore, with all proper gravity, made not the slightest objection to its magnitude, but mentioned his inexperience in such affairs as an objection to saying any thing decisive on the subject just then, so he brushed the papers carelessly aside.

"I will think of it," said he; "I had almost decided to make no more purchases at present. But, of course, an enterprise of this kind, presenting, as you say, such tempting advantages for the investment of capital, stands on a different ground to the trifles on which I have lately expended a rather large sum."


The acting of Tremore was nature itself, and it had every accessory that could give it effect. The habitual deference paid him, had given him an air of easy superiority,

which accorded perfectly with his distinguished figure. The room in which he sat, which appeared as though boundless expenditure had been a study in furnishing it, and the splendour of the whole establishment, with its array of liveried retainers, of which he was absolute master, had their weight. Had Mr. Laneton possessed the eyes of Argus, he must have been deceived. The lavish expenditure of Florian on trifles, satisfied him that report could hardly have exaggerated the extent of his fortune; and exactly as his conviction grew on that point did his respect for him increase, and his desire "to serve him," after his own peculiar fashion, become stronger.

He therefore pressed the advantages of the proposal he had submitted the more earnestly; and with insinuating deference intimated, that if the mere want of so considerable a sum of ready money as was required was an objection, he had a large sum lying idle just then, which he should be proud to place at Mr. Tremore's disposal. He could have it for a short time, while he made other arrangements, at a mere nominal rate of interest, and he would at a word place it to his credit at Drummond's the next morning.

Tremore turned from the subject, and spoke of plans for the autumn. He was uncertain how he should pass it. The captain of his yacht had been to him at Hurst-place, to know whether he would like a cruise round the coast or up the Mediterranean. His house at Brighton was ready for his reception. He was told he ought to visit Glengairn, and to pass some time at Emsworth. He really scarcely knew what to do.

Mr. Laneton decided the point for him in a few moments. He ought not during his first year to leave the country. If he had no use for his yacht, it would materially oblige a friend of Mr. Laneton's to have it for a month or two. He might make up a delightful party at Glengairn, as it was certain the Queen would pass the autumn in the Highlands. Brighton might be visited later in the year, and some liveliness would be a relief there after the seclusion of the north. Christmas could be agreeably passed at Emsworth, when some arrangement might be made to return him for the county as soon as a vacancy could be managed, and quite early in the spring he must return to town and secure himself a political position.



“Do you know,” he added laughingly, “I have in my own mind given you a year of complete liberty? Then you must marry, ‘give hostages to fortune’ in wife and children, take your part in active life, and attach yourself to a political party, the source of all power in this country. It is seldom that a man is worth any thing before marriage. He dwindles away the best part of life in flirtations and nonsense. It is not till he is completely settled that he can throw himself fairly into pursuits worthy of him; and the earlier this takes place, the more likely is he to become distinguished. With your talents and your position, you may, at your age, become what you please.”

“I don’t know,” said Tremore, slightly yawning, “but that I may prefer a private station. What should I have to gain by public life?”

“A mistake! believe me, a mistake! which young men are apt to fall into. They fancy that as the enjoyments of early life are so pleasurable, nothing is wanting but a continuance of them. But they soon fade, and then a pursuit, into which man can throw all his energies, becomes needed—a pursuit which can fill all his thoughts, engage all his

time, exercise all his ingenuity. Those who commence this pursuit soonest are likely to be most successful in it. If deferred too late, the chance is lost, and then though the idler may talk of philosophy, and affect indifference to the concerns of the world, yet you will find him at heart a discontented man, repining over what he has lost, and keenly susceptible to the contempt which his obscurity provokes. Whatever a man affects, let him aspire to excel in it, say I. It is no use being too scrupulous. He must seize opportunities as they present themselves. He has a ladder to climb, and has a right to get to the top of it the best way he can. Depend on it, that in serving himself he will serve others quite as much as is necessary. My life has been fortunate, because it has been active. I declare to you I never knew a man who let slip any of the great prizes of life through his own fault, who was not a miserable misanthrope, whatever cheerfulness he outwardly affected to disguise it."

He rose, and, as he took Florian's hand, said—

"You will consider, then, of this railway business."

"It shall have my best attention," rejoined Tremore.

"And as to funds"——

"Oh! if I feel inclined to take it up, it is not the amount involved that shall stop me."

"By the way, in presuming to give you my notions on your autumn arrangements, I forgot to say, you must positively make time to pay us a visit in North Wales. I have a pretty picturesque place there, and I make a point of going down once or twice a year, that I may look into the management of some iron-works, in which I have a share."

Florian, as the capitalist departed, thought what a clever, shrewd man he was, and mused long on his observation, that in this world it was foolish to be too particular. Why, if fortune threw opportunities in his way, should he neglect them? As he was on the stream, it was best to let it carry him where it would.

And now the curious reader may ask what motive Mr. Laneton could have had in making the proposal he did to "his distinguished young friend?" Who can say? The motive was not clear to himself. His instinct more than his reason led him on. If it be conjectured that he wished to take advantage of

Tremore in the transaction—to make money by it in any way otherwise than to fairly raise the value of the line by bringing more capital into it—I must do him the justice to say that such conjecture is entirely unfounded. The terms he offered were positively advantageous; the speculation itself was perfectly legitimate and safe, and as certain of proving fairly remunerative as any speculation of the kind could be. In fact, he had at one time much thought of taking the whole to himself; and perhaps he would have done so, but that his fingers tingled to make acquaintance with the fortune he supposed Tremore to possess.

Now, in his experience he had found that the surest way to make the wealthiest man poor, and the most powerful dependent, was to straiten him for *ready money*. Directly any man on whom he had set his mark became embarrassed for funds to meet immediate demands, however extensive his property might be, Mr. Laneton marked him for his own. As soon as he could fasten a loan on him, he knew he had him safe. That was his mode of casting the lasso and bringing his prize to the ground, and he never knew it fail. He was never better pleased than to

see his friends buy bargains which he knew they must borrow money to pay for. When he sold an estate, he was always best pleased to let a portion of the purchase-money remain on mortgage. But, I repeat, he took these first steps without any consciousness of his ulterior designs. When he threw a bargain in the way of his friends, and lent them money to pay for it, it seemed to himself, as it seemed to the rest of the world, that he was doing them a good turn. And when, step by step, he had accumulated upon them an amount of embarrassment which it was impossible for them to surmount, then he deplored the sad necessity which compelled him to sacrifice them to his own safety; and with a clear conscience, when in their despair they accused him of treachery, and sought to injure him—vain endeavour!—in the good opinion of the world, he “washed his hands of them.”

CHAPTER XVII.

The fear
That guilty creatures feel—a shudd'ring dread
Comes o'er me when I hear the name of father !
Unfold this wondrous mystery of Heaven,
Why of a thousand fathers only this
Should fall to me ?

SCHILLER.

MR. LANETON walked home. He always found time for exercise in the day. Though, on occasions, he could be liberal in his expenditure, yet he disliked the smallest unnecessary outlay. He kept up a handsome equipage, gave a high price for his horses, and good wages to his coachman, but he very rarely indeed expended a shilling on cab-hire. In passing through Piccadilly the prettiest miniature equipage imaginable passed him, and then drew up. A boy-groom quick as thought leapt from behind, to stand at the cream-coloured ponies' heads. They were, with flowing main and tail, exactly matched ;

and the light low phæton had the luxurious look of an easy-chair. Two ladies were seated in it; the younger one who was driving just touched Mr. Laneton with her parasol-whip; he turned and recognised Rhoda Haughton, looking as brilliant and blooming as when she honoured his rooms with her presence some weeks back. She smiled on him with her large dark eyes and dimpled cheeks, and saluted him with frank cordiality as "cousin."

"My mamma is an old friend of yours, I believe, though she does not often see you now. Una must think me very neglectful; I should have called on her, but we have been staying in the country."

"And where in the name of wonder have you hid yourself?" he asked, gratified by her kind greeting.

"Oh! at a relative's; an abominably stupid place. But we are poor you know, and must eke out our income as we best can. We have lost the best of the season, but we are resolved to enjoy a week or two of it before its close. Is Una in town?"

"Yes, and I am sure will be happy to see you."

"Well, I shall call soon. Give my love to

her, and tell her I will not forget her so long again. Good-by."

She held out her delicately-gloved hand to Mr. Laneton. He pressed it with respect; for with all his shrewdness he could not escape the influence of appearance—she shook the reins, the ponies started forward, and in a moment more the fairy-like equipage, with its beautiful charioteer, was out of sight.

"Poor, are they?" soliloquized Mr. Laneton; "yes, they must be poor. The mother has an annuity of four or five hundred pounds at the outside; yet who would think it to look at them? It is a wonder how people manage to live as they do, and it puzzles me more and more. However, she is a clever, lively girl; and I really think her society would do Una good. It would be only civil to ask her to pass a few days with us. One of my women shall do it."

He enquired for his daughter on arriving at home. She was in her room.

"Will you tell her I wish to speak with her?" he said.

He had not seen her before that day; and, as his custom was, he kissed her when she

entered, and noticed that her cheek was flushed.

"What is the matter, Una?" he enquired sharply; "you feel feverish. Has any thing disturbed you?"

"No," she replied; "nothing, except the heat, which always distresses me. Have you not told me it was very sultry when my mother died?"

"Yes, child! But why should you recur so often to that melancholy event?"

"What else have I to think of?" she returned. "Ought I not to think of the grave and its mysteries, which shut me from her?"

"My dear child! you must shake off these gloomy fancies. They are not natural to your age. Why do you not endeavour to enjoy your youth? Surely you have every thing to render it desirable? Have you any thing to wish for?"

She hesitated a moment, and then raising her eyes, in which there was an appealing expression, said—

"I wish to be placed in possession of my fortune."

Mr. Laneton bit his lip with vexation—

"My dearest Una, what can you possibly

want with your fortune now? You must have it when you are of age, as then it will be absolutely at your own disposal, and I will account to you for every shilling of it. What can you desire more? Surely your present allowance is sufficient for you?"

She was silent. Her allowance was indeed extremely handsome. But, like a royal civil list, though large in the gross, it dwindled away when examined in detail. She kept her own horses, groom, footman, and lady's maid. She subscribed liberally to all charities, a special fund being set apart for that purpose. She was expected to lay out a certain sum yearly with each one of her tradespeople; so that, when all these regulated demands were met, it was a very small sum indeed that came into her hands to be at her own disposal.

"Allow me to say, Una," her father continued in a graver tone, "that this anxiety to obtain possession of the large sum you inherit through your mother, is not calculated to impress me favourably with your prudence. You should recollect, that it was not intrusted to you to squander at your pleasure, and that you will have no *moral* right to do more than spend the interest."

"On that point," she said coldly, "I must judge for myself."

On several occasions lately, Mr. Laneton had discerned evidences of a strength of will in his daughter, which warned him that he would have to struggle to maintain his authority over her. He knew he had some strong cards in his hand to play against her, in his remembrance of her mother; and he did not at all doubt that he should be able to subdue her, when her resistance became more decided. But he judged it most wise to avoid dispute as long as he could, in the hope that he might succeed in his favourite wish of getting her settled before she became of age; and, by some means or other, he was determined to tie up her fortune so closely, that she should never touch more than the interest of it. Changing the subject, then, he said—

"I have news for you. Florian is returned. I saw him this morning just after his arrival, and he enquired very kindly after you."

"Did he say he had heard from Caven-dish?" she asked.

"To tell you the truth, I forgot to ask him. I cannot help thinking that the *rôle*

of Cavendish is pretty well played out. Florian, you know, is just of age, and seems to have entered on absolute possession of all the revenues and estates we once considered Cavendish's. There is something mysterious in this. I know Cavendish *was* enormously wealthy, but who can tell how he may have squandered his money? and perhaps, as the guardian of Florian (whom he seems to have kept in the background very unjustifiably), he may have obtained credit for much greater property than he really possessed."

"Perhaps so," she replied, "but it is really of little consequence."

Mr. Laneton elevated his eyebrows, and began to doubt whether his daughter, notwithstanding her fine intellect, was quite right in her head.

"He dines with us to-morrow, Una. I said I was sure you would be happy to see him."

"Yes," she returned, "I like him very much. He does not distress me, and he appears very amiable."

"He is so—I can answer for that. I only hope his generous temper may not be imposed on. He would have given six or seven thousand pounds to release Bellstar from

jail; but my lawyer, Mr. Stone, managed it in another way."

"Is it true that Bellstar has gone with Geraldine to France?"

"Yes, so I hear. John Smith has taken them by the hand, and is going to set them up in one of his little farms in Northampton, or something of that sort. What a capital joke! Bellstar a farmer, looking after the increase of mixens and the saving of liquid manure, with Lady Geraldine to assist him in milking cows and salting down fat pork!" He laughed at the picture his fancy drew, and added—"I hope some caricaturist will lay hold of the notion. It's too good to be lost. He might show the pair at their rural occupations; the gentleman in his silk dressing-gown, and the lady in her satin shoes."

Una replied with some asperity—

"I hope they are indifferent to ridicule, and that they will rise above privation. If their life be innocent, they may at least feel secure from the wrath which waits on those who make a prey of their fellow creatures."

Mr. Laneton replied carelessly—

"You seem vexed at the thought of their mortification, Una; yet surely they have deserved it. Geraldine for her deceit and dis-

obedience, and Godfrey, if I may use a plain word, for his rascality."

She coloured deeply as she answered—

"They are my friends, and I do not wish to hear them abused."

"Oh! in that case I say with one of Sheridan's characters—

'As they are your friends'"—

"Yes," she exclaimed, with more energy than she usually exhibited, "I am proud of their friendship! If they have been driven to deceit, it is more excusable in them than in those who adopt it by choice, and make a profession of it. Were they prosperous, those who now censure would be eager to applaud them."

Her father passed by the remark, pretending, or perhaps thinking, that it did not concern him.

"I met, while returning home, another of your acquaintances, Rhoda Haughton. She was looking even better than when we last saw her."

"Indeed! I hoped she had left England."

"Hoped it! Why so? You are severe, Una." He said this with a slight sneer, as if there was something absurd in the notion

of severity on the part of a girl—his own daughter—whom he had been accustomed to treat as a mere child. “Miss Haughton is clever and accomplished. She has never been separated from her mamma; and, though there may be too much *dash* about her for our taste, yet her character is irreproachable. As she is in town, I wish you to invite her to stay with you for a few days. Such an act of civility is only due to your relationship.”

“What should I say to her?” asked Una quietly.

“Say to her!” exclaimed Mr. Laneton, who really thought his daughter wished him to dictate her note of invitation; “I should have thought you would have known what to say to her. I do not know how young ladies address each other; but I suppose you will begin, ‘my dear cousin,’ or ‘my dear Rhoda,’ and then proceed to say, that hearing she has arrived in town, it will give you great, or infinite pleasure, or something of that sort, if she will contrive to pass a few days with you here. If you wish it, I will sketch out a note for you in a moment.”

“Why should I say her society will give me pleasure, when I do not like her? That would be telling a falsehood.”

Mr. Laneton almost despised his daughter for a simpleton.

"You must know," he said, "that the *bienséances* of society require the use of expressions a little exaggerated. Even if you do not like Miss Haughton, my wishes ought to have some weight with you. I desire this visit solely for your own good; for I really think her lively society would rouse your spirits. You would certainly be improved if you possessed a little of her manner and animation."

"We do not suit each other," Una replied coldly. "She would disturb me, and I should probably offend her. She is, I know, one of those who think that 'not to leave undone, but to keep unknown,' should be the rule of conduct. I cannot respect her."

Mr. Laneton was getting angry. He had taken up the day's paper, and fixed his eyes upon it, that he might the better affect indifference.

"I hope, Una," he said, in measured tones, "that as your guardian, if not as your father, you will allow me to be a proper judge of the persons fit for your society. I am afraid you are beginning to presume on my indulgence. I now require you"——

At this moment the door softly opened; he looked up, and beheld the skirt of Una's dress as she retired from the room. He was about to recall her; but he checked himself, considered for a moment, and then smothered his vexation in a laugh at her folly.

"I must not be conquered in this way, though," he said; and, ringing the bell, he ordered Mrs. Heartsbane to be summoned.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Spiritual pride is the worst of all prides ; it is a very bad species of a very bad passion.—STERNE.

I HAVE introduced this lady to my readers before, but in a very inadequate manner; and while Mr. Laneton is waiting her presence—for she was one of the Mansion-house Committee for promoting female emigration, and was at the moment busily employed in making up a bundle of flannel petticoats for the first ship-load of girls destined to proceed to New South Wales—I will endeavour to supply the deficiency, and do her justice.


She was a lady of most admirable temper. She was never known to be in a passion, though she was often very much provoked. Indeed she was convinced that she suffered under a Satanic system of continued persecution, which nothing but grace could enable her to

bear with the meekness she did. Having a high opinion of her spiritual importance, she was satisfied that every little cross, every petty annoyance she sustained, were recorded by an avenging angel, in a heavenly folio with huge brass clasps, kept expressly to register all the insults and injuries she was doomed to suffer during her earthly pilgrimage. Good, pious soul! she forgave from her heart, as she often boasted, all her persecutors, enemies, and slanderers; and every Sunday repeated that petition in the Litany with peculiar unction. But whether Heaven would do so, was more than she could tell. By the shaking of her head, it was plain she scarcely thought such a stretch of mercy was consistent with the justice of Heaven.

The reader may wonder how it happened that a respectable maiden lady—holding very little commerce with the world—could have so many enemies, and be so cruelly persecuted. Perhaps it was, that knowing herself to be one of the elect, she was wrathful at not finding her claims to superiority on that account generally admitted, as a sullen prince in exile treasures up every neglect of his royal dignity, to be amply revenged there-

after. Her religion was not of that kind which softens and humbles the heart by a consciousness of infirmity. She called herself a sinner, in the same spirit that a Hildebrand washes the feet of beggars. In her heart spiritual pride had been the sole growth of religious profession; and this rank and poisonous weed had so usurped the place of more wholesome and benignant dispositions, and so stupified her conscience, that it sank into a sleep near to the sleep of death.

In her young days, when, as she was accustomed to relate—while dilating on the grace which had saved her—she was no better than the rest of the world, she resided with a brother to whom she was greatly attached. He, as men will do, foolishly fell in love, and, without much consideration of future difficulties, married the woman of his choice. Priscilla never forgave either of them. She prophesied their ruin; and had the supreme felicity of living to see her prophecy accomplished. The husband, borne down by the cares of a large family, and by unsuccessful trade, forgot his pride in his necessities, and petitioned his sister for assistance. She had thriven wonderfully—for she understood the art, and had suc-




ceeded to the property of a lady with whom she lived as companion, and whose ear she had poisoned against her relatives. She did not deny her brother—that would have been contrary to her principles; but she made him feel that he was dependent on her alms—insulted him before her servants—took one of his daughters, whom she degraded by menial employments—and had the satisfaction at last of seeing him sink broken-hearted into a premature grave. But her charity did not end with his life. No! she was too Christian to forget the ties of blood. She retained the girl, that she might not, as she published abroad, be contaminated by the bad example of her mother. The child had a high spirit. Mrs. Priscilla resolved to break it, and to make her a shining example of grace. She succeeded, as the miser succeeded in feeding his horse on an oat a day. That mysterious connection which subsists between the spirit and the life of a child, could not be separated even by Mrs. Priscilla's skill. When the girl's spirit was effectually broken by her aunt's remorseless discipline, she withered and died. The calamity affected Mrs. Priscilla a good deal; for she doubted whether the

work of grace had been accomplished, and she reproached herself for having been too lenient in her dealings with the girl's rebellious nature.

When this exemplary lady was informed by Mr. Laneton of his intention respecting Miss Haughton, she immediately regarded it as an inspiration of Satan, and prepared for resistance with the spirit of a martyr. She stoutly refused to write the invitation he desired, and declared she would rather quit his house—which, with her departure, she knew would be as doomed as ever was Sodom or Gomorrah of old—on that very instant.

"So be it!" said Mr. Laneton, now thoroughly provoked. "When the servant answers the bell, order your desk to be brought you, or the carriage to be ready for your departure at ten to-morrow. The freakish disposition of Una may excuse her silly refusal, but your obstinacy I will not tolerate."

So Una had refused! Before those words were uttered, Mrs. Priscilla had prepared herself for the last extreme of persecution, and was inwardly reciting a hymn on Daniel in the lion's den. But the disobedience of a daughter to her father's mandate



struck her as so shocking as to move her compassion. When the footman appeared, Mrs. Priscilla said quietly—

“Bring me my desk from the blue drawing-room.”

A note, as kind and flattering as Mr. Laneton could desire, was written and despatched. The invitation was accepted, but when Miss Haughton arrived Una was too unwell to leave her room.

The brilliant, masculine Miss Haughton, cared for Una no more than for an insect beneath her foot. She despised her as a wayward fool, and in private even ventured to hint a doubt to Mr. Laneton of her perfect sanity. But she had too much spirit to remain the guest of the puritanical Mrs. Heartsbane, and took her departure the day after her arrival.

Mr. Laneton conceived for his daughter, from that time, a feeling akin to bitter resentment. The fool will be the plague of my life, he thought, unless I can marry her speedily. It must, and shall be done; and then, in the bustle of marriage settlements, I do not doubt being able to tie up her fortune by settling it absolutely on her heirs. One thing I am resolved on at any rate,

that she shall never touch a shilling of the principal.

What would he have thought had some one of those "spirits that walk the earth," raised up for a moment the veil which hangs over futurity?

CHAPTER XIX.

We contemplate with anxiety the outward troubles and vicissitudes of human life; but what should we feel if we could behold the inward vicissitudes, the troubles of the human soul?—if we could see how many dangers, snares, enemies, combats, victories, and defeats can be crowded into a day—an hour? Victory is impossible, and defeat certain, if man has not a just conception and a profound feeling of his dangers, his weaknesses, and his need of assistance.—GUIZOT.

No one was more hearty in congratulating Florian on his “escape” than Freeborn. He had considered himself completely beaten when his friend, in spite of all his remonstrances and reasonings, backed by jest and sarcasm, persisted in accepting Lord Glarvale’s invitation. In reckoning up the misfortunes of his life, he found they were all due to manœuvring mammas. They had robbed him, one by one, of all his best friends. True, some good houses were still open to him; but, what was of more consequence, the purses of their owners were closed. There were plenty of persons ready

to give him a dinner; but to accommodate him with a loan—that was quite another thing. A wife, he held, was the bane of all good fellowship. Castor and Pollux, and Damon and Pythias must, it is quite clear, have continued single, or their friendship would never have passed into a proverb. Had either taken to himself a wife, she would have set him by the ears with brother or friend before the first day of the honeymoon was expired.

How the fat rogue chuckled and laughed when he first heard the whole story from the Major-general! As his promises always far outran his power, he vowed he would get him a thousand subscribers for his Despatches, and set a subscription afoot to erect a statue in his honour.

Florian was quite unable to resist his cordial greeting. His invincible good-humour, his jests, his ready laugh, his fund of merry gossip, and his random satire, were highly acceptable to him, as a relief from irksome thoughts, and he resigned himself easily to his careless good-humour.

“You must leave town next week, at latest,” said Freeborn; “it is a thousand pities that you have lost the best part of a

month—a precious month at this period of the year—in that retreat of dulness. Who can touch pitch and not be defiled? The fate of the Indian juggler, who had himself buried for a fortnight, and came out of his grave as lively as ever, is nothing to yours in staying so long at Hurst-place without being reduced to extremity. You must want something to enliven you, and I'll tell you what you ought to do to close the season with *éclat*."

And thereupon Freeborn disclosed his plan. It was to give a dinner at each of the principal taverns in and about London for the next week or so, to some half-dozen of the best fellows in town.

"Let's begin," said he, "after an old fashion, with a steak at the Exchange chop-house—then go to the Trafalgar at Greenwich, whitebait's in season now—afterwards to the Star and Garter, and so on. You will see the prettiest places about London; we shall have some capital fun, and the change, I'll engage, will give a relish to each day's repast."

Freeborn carried out his plan so successfully, that these dinners became the town-talk—Lucullus, had he been living, would

have approved them. Young men, desirous of a reputation for skill in gastronomic science, eagerly desired an invitation to them, satisfied that the culinary art must achieve its *chefs-d'œuvre* in these *recherché* banquets. The fat rascal, all the time, was as much in his element as the Justice in Sir Giles Overreach's kitchen; for he was a *bon-vivant* by nature, as he boasted, with physical tastes of rare and subtle delicacy.

During this week of varied pleasures, Florian had little time for reflection. A multitude of affairs, neglected during his absence from town, pressed on his attention. He was amazed at the extent of his patronage. Cavendish had left a power of attorney, which gave him authority to fill up all vacancies in his gift—and till this time he little guessed "how extremely obliged" those polite and noble beggars would be, who go about soliciting charity for their friends and relatives, by nomination to a public school, or an appointment to any of those offices which, in our happy country, are always at the disposal of wealth and influence, though rigorously closed to the application of unpatronised merit.

Then he had invitations out of number on




his hands, from persons of distinction whom he hardly recollected to have seen.

How much of the admiration he excited was due to those qualities with which nature had gifted him—to his youth and beauty—I pretend not to say. Had he come in the shape of a huge, fat, clumsy brute, with the manners of a bully, and the ideas of a huckster, he might have been equally courted by that crowd—ranging from a prime minister downwards—who have every thing to gain by subserviency to Mammon. But in that case the flattery paid him would have been less refined. He would not have seen fair faces kindle at his approach, nor sweet lips smile at his words, nor beautiful eyes sparkle with pleasure at his glance. He was the beau-ideal of eligibility to all prudent mammas, and a very Apollo to all young ladies emerging from the alphabet of sentiment.

The last dinner was, as Freeborn intended it should be, the pearl of the set; and the guests assembled were more numerous than at the previous entertainments. All were polished Epicureans who could understand and applaud the care which had been taken for their gratification. After dinner, the

wine circulated, and the talkers of the party became less patient of interruption to themselves, and more eager to interrupt others. More Lafitte and coffee were ordered together. Some of the party proposed cards—others, hazard—and others, billiards; but Freeborn was resolved that his charge should be exposed to none of those perils. He proposed a ramble through the town, and the proposal was uproariously greeted, for the guests were now ripe for any frolic.

It is not for my pen to raise the dark curtain which hangs over the iniquities of London—to describe those vile haunts, which, to the disgrace of our police and our boasted civilisation, are permitted to exist in the thickest thoroughfares of the metropolis, to lure the thoughtless and the unwary to their ruin. In those dens of infamy—look to it, ye censors of the press!—look to it, ye guardians of the public morals, who sit in high places!—vice wears for the poor toiler in the shop, the factory, and the counting-house, its most seductive aspect. Licentiousness and debauchery—oh, happy privilege of this age of equality!—are cheapened to his narrow means, and at the cost of a few pence he is admitted to “salons” where tinsel trap-




pings make up a show of splendour, and nymphs flaunt in the draperies of the ballet and the spangles of the theatre, and permitted to share the lewd embrace and the dissolute sports of the wretched creatures who make vice a profession, and who flourish by incentives to crime.

With a giddy brain, reeling when he rose from table, Tremore was hurried from one resort of debauchery to another—every where wantons, making sport of their shame, crowded about him, soliciting his favour—every where more wine was called for, and gold freely distributed. He did not lose his consciousness in the midst of all this riot; but he resigned himself to it—and danced, and shouted, and drank with those about him. Sometimes they dashed through the streets in cabs—sometimes they staggered through them on foot, in search of some new haunt deeper in depravity than the last. In one of these, located in an obscure court stretching from the Strand, he got involved in a scuffle he knew not how—blows were aimed at him—he snatched up a decanter to defend himself, but was quickly thrown to the ground by numbers, separated from his companions, robbed of every thing he possessed,

and then thrust from the door, which opened into a court different from that by which he had entered.

Day had dawned, and the streets were divided between the lowest debauchery of the night and the most squalid industry of the day. Shivering with a feeling of feverish ague, and tormented by a racking headache, Tremore with some difficulty made his way through a network of courts into a leading thoroughfare. He looked about him, and recognised the street in which was placed the gateway of the dingy inn where he had lately lodged. His path led him directly past it. He looked to the top of the high wall, and recognised the iron casement of his attic. What a throng of recollections crowded upon his throbbing brain at the view! How often in that room he had desired wealth for the opportunities of good he fancied it must present! How often had he paced that very street, happy in imagining schemes for benefiting the state of the poor beings who poured into it from courts on either side—the filthy abodes of ignorance, poverty, and crime! He was then rich in dreams and hopes, and he had faith in his own heart. Was he not happier then, while believing in



some undeveloped good in his nature, than now that he had failed in the trial? His conscience smote him for all his sins of omission—those sins, which men by their conduct seem not to believe in, but which will form a fearful item in the last great account. And those two poor girls, so innocent and so friendless, who had warmly welcomed him on his arrival in London—who had anticipated so much good from his friendship—who had loved him for himself alone—he seemed to know it now—how could he have been so cruel as to neglect them? He hesitated whether he should not at once abandon his life of splendid falsehood, return to his old abode, and assist them as he best could. How is it that our good angel abandons us when we have most need of his presence? Why does he always flee from the face of the tempter, and resign us to his power almost without a struggle? Why, in our inward conflicts, is the worst side always permitted to prevail? Perhaps, because the mere affording access to the thought of evil is an unpardonable sin, and to warn us that the halting between two opinions, when good is on one side and ill on the other, is already to have forfeited our claim to angelic guardianship.

As Florian paused for a minute in doubt, he recollected that he had been robbed of every thing—that he had not wherewithal to procure even a single meal. Besides, he felt depressed and unwell, and in no condition to resume his former tasks. He resolved, then, to return, but to make a better use of his time, and of the wealth entrusted to him. To hail a cab, and direct the driver to his residence, was but the work of a moment. The welcome attentions he received on his arrival helped to dissipate his uneasy thoughts, and soften his repentance. He took a fever draught before retiring to rest, felt gradually his pains die off in grateful repose, and sank into a deep and refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER XX.

A great regard to wealth, and a total contempt of virtue, are sentiments very nearly allied.—BOLINGBROKE.

WHEN Florian awoke he found a physician at his bedside feeling his pulse. Sir Richard Burton pressed his hand as he opened his eyes, and said—

“Not much the matter. You have little need of medicine this time, but I’ll prescribe for you, nevertheless.”

Freeborn was seated in an arm-chair at the window. He had become alarmed on missing his friend, and, without retiring to rest, had called early in the morning to enquire after him. Habit had rendered him indifferent to regular repose; he snatched his sleep as he could get it; and, directing Sir Richard to be sent for as a measure of precaution, he had waited his arrival, and entered the room with him.

Sir Richard was a fashionable physician, but his practice was rather exclusive than wide. Every one acknowledged his skill, but "family" houses were closed against him. In early life he had offended the heads of his profession by the freedom of his opinions, and by some irreverent jokes on their formularies. He had quoted against them the sarcasm of Molière, that it was better to kill with the remedies prescribed by the faculty than cure by any other means. They adopted, in return, the Quaker's plan of revenge. They did not reply to his attacks, but they raised an outcry against his morals, and said he was more gay than suited with his profession. It is probable that, as in many other cases, the very confidence of the assertion worked its own fulfilment. No doubt, the hunted dog did run mad, if he chanced to escape his pursuers with his life. But for a long time Burton tried to live down the evil report. He had advertised for a housekeeper, and taken the ugliest of the elderly ladies who presented themselves. He supped on water-gruel, and was never out, except professionally, after eight in the evening. With the resolution of a hero, he got up at nine to see poor patients *gratis*,

and starved himself into the look of an ascetic. But all was of no avail. The world is inexorable in its judgments. Sir Richard resigned in despair all hope of winning a character for respectability, and trusted to his acknowledged ability for practice. He had literary tastes, and had published some clever essays, exposing time-honoured errors in medical practice. His talents introduced him to the notice of his sovereign, by whom he was knighted, and thenceforth—though he could never remove the shade which had been fastened on his name, and which deepened as he grew older and still remained a bachelor—he rose into lucrative practice, mixed in the highest circles, and was scarcely less esteemed for his social qualities than his professional skill.

He laughed at the dejection which Florian, on waking, was unable to conceal.

“This re-action is quite natural,” he said ; “the equilibrium of nature will not be disturbed without a penalty. No one ever spent a night in boisterous merriment without being distressed by blue devils in the morning. I am happy to say you have sustained no other injury than a few bruises. You must take a bath when you rise, and

one small cup of coffee while you are in it. When you have dressed you must eat a morsel of deviled chicken, or something of that sort, to stimulate the stomach, and try—you can't do better—Byron's prescription of hock and soda water. Then, as the day is cloudy, you had better have a drive, and, if you remain quiet, you'll feel delightfully tranquil by bedtime. I'll just write for something for you to take at night, which will quite carry off any feverish feeling."

Tremore mentioned his wish to be at Mr. Laneton's in the evening.

"Oh, go by all means! The society will do you good. One always meets some agreeable people at his house. Have you seen his relative, Miss Haughton? I had no idea she was so bewitchingly handsome. She deserves all the fuss that has been made about her. She is resolved, they say, to settle now, and, with her beauty and wit, I dare say she'll succeed, though he must be a bold man who seriously thinks of her as his

is leave, dragging Freeborn with
he told Tremore, the sight of
should have some effect in pro-
pains.

Florian alone, musing over his last night's adventures, found after all that he had little to reproach himself with, and almost wondered at his despondency in the morning. It was not, he argued, as if he were a free agent; but of what use was it to form a plan of conduct for a few months? What worthy design could be carried out in so short a time. The wealth entrusted to him—for it was but entrusted—was meant to be expended on objects of luxury, and, in dissipating it on trifles, he had but fulfilled its real owner's intention. He pitied those poor girls from his heart; he considered how much he should be justified in doing for them, without breaking his promise; and determined that, at all events, they should be something the better for his prosperity. Acting on this resolve, he obtained notes to the amount of £100, and enclosed them with a few words in a disguised hand.

He directed his messenger to their poor lodging, and enjoined him to leave the letter without waiting for an answer. Having thus relieved his conscience, his spirits rose, and he went out for an hour's drive, returning exhilarated by the rapid motion and fresh air.

His messenger had not yet returned, but there lay on his table a small parcel, which has for men in our days a more than magic interest. It was his banker's book. He had sent to have it made up the previous day, feeling some doubt how his account stood. The business of filling up cheques was so new to him, and withal so pleasant, that he took no heed of the sums he dispensed. The figures which met his eye startled him. Could it be possible? He saw that the items of his expenditure amounted to £31,073, though he imagined that he had a surplus of four or five thousand pounds at least. For a moment he was in consternation, until he saw below those figures—the entry, “Balance, £18,917.” Then he breathed freely, and rapidly ran over the items of the debtor account, which he found, notwithstanding his astonishment—the case is a common one—to be quite correct. But how was it that the thirty thousand pounds placed to his credit had swelled to fifty thousand? He turned to the opposite page and read, “J. W. Laneton, Esq., per cheque on Glynn's, £20,000.” Then he remembered his conversation with Mr. Laneton on the morning of his return to town, and further remem-

bered, that when he had casually met that gentleman a few days since, he had begged him to think over the matter, adding that, whether he engaged in the undertaking or not, he should be equally glad to be relieved of a portion of his surplus capital, to which he, Florian, returned a careless obliging answer, that he would willingly do any thing in his power to serve Mr. Laneton. On that hint he now perceived the capitalist must have acted, as the £20,000 was placed to his credit that very day.

What should he do—what ought he to do? Cavendish had said that, if he required more money, more should be forthcoming. But how was he to apply to him? At any rate, there could be no doubt that he would unhesitatingly restore as much of this amount, as Florian might find necessary to expend to maintain his station. He could not go on without some money—that was plain; so the best way might be to proceed as if he were unconscious of this loan, and to spend in future no more than was necessary.

His meditations were disturbed by the return of his messenger. He reported that the young ladies to whom the letter was directed had been gone for several weeks;

and that no one knew where they were to be found, though he had made the most particular enquiries.

"Doubtless," thought Tremore, "they have met with some turn of good fortune, and no longer require my aid. Well, I am glad of it, though I could have wished to be of service to them. I have no time to enquire after them myself now, but when I return from the north I will certainly do so."

His messenger did not tell him all the truth. In Fleet-street, at the corner of Shoe-lane—it was in that wretched locality that the poor girls had lately lodged, that they might be nearer the warehouse for which Griselda worked—he had met Mr. Laneton. Mr. Laneton was a leading man in the Equitable, and had just come thence, having previously called at the City Gas-Works, in which he was an extensive shareholder.

"Why, what do you do at this end of the town, James?" enquired the great capitalist of the smirking porter.

The man, pleased to show his knowledge of his master's secrets, drew forth the letter, and said—

"I have been endeavouring to find the

young ladies to whom this letter is addressed, Sir; but no one knows where they are gone to. I suppose it is no use enquiring of you, Sir?"

Mr. Laneton's sharp eye read the address as the man held the letter in his hand, and he as quickly divined the meaning of the smile on his face.

"Why, James," he replied mildly, and with an answering smile, "you might know it's of no use asking me about young ladies who live near Shoe-lane. I suppose they are seldom constant to one lodging, and perhaps they have shifted their quarters half a dozen times since your master knew them."

He turned away, but the next instant called the messenger back to him—

"You will go by Coutts's, I think? Just leave my card for Mr. Marjoribanks, and say I will see him to-morrow; and there's half a sovereign for you."

Rock's right, I'll be bound for it, thought Mr. Laneton; these girls are no better than they should be, and I shouldn't wonder if the sickness of one of them wasn't all a sham. What should Tremore, a man of fashion, know of them else? I'll make them no more offers; it only encourages their insolence.

One thing I am determined on—the cause must and shall be wound up; and, if Flint won't move, Rock and Stone shall manage it between them.

With this thought in his mind, he retraced his steps to the office of Mr. Rock, and found that conscientious practitioner in his back hole, rubbing his hands over a discovery he had just made. One of his clerks, he told Mr. Laneton quite confidentially, had just come in to say, that he had—dreadful to relate—traced Griselda that very afternoon to a house of ill-fame; and there could be no doubt, therefore, of the course of life she had taken up with.

“Ah!” he cried dismally, “it is fearful to think that these young women should come to this, after all I've done for them. Their pride has been their ruin. I cannot in my conscience, Sir, oppose you any longer. It would be sin in me to do so, with the clear conviction I have of your right; and so I shall tell these misguided young women. I cannot quite give them up yet—I will see them this very evening after office hours; and show them, purely for their own good, what sad consequences must fall on them if they persist in their obstinacy. I shall tax

them roundly with what I have discovered; for, as they have no one to look after them, I feel quite in the position of their guardian, having been their solicitor so long. And as I know that, notwithstanding Miss Grizell's sad courses, they are in great want, I shouldn't be surprised if the offer of a round sum down"—[Mr. Laneton made a gesture of dissent]—"not from you, certainly not, but from myself—a sum offered them out of pure compassion for their distress; for I do feel a great deal for them—I can't help that—I shouldn't wonder if they didn't accept present relief, on any terms; and, when the whole matter's settled, then we may endeavour to provide for them both. Miss Grizell, I suppose, will have to be sent to the Magdalen—[as he said this, a smile surprised his face, and illumined the tip of his burnished nose]—and the other can be got into some Dispensary. They have behaved very ungratefully to me after all I have done for them, but I sha'n't remember that. In this naughty world, Mr. Laneton, we that have a conscience, an inward monitor here, Sir—[he placed his hand with great gravity on the place where his heart should be]—must be content to return good for evil.

Ah! what is outward trouble compared to inward peace; what is"——

Mr. Laneton's time was too precious to allow him to waste it in listening longer to the moral reflections of the Methodistical attorney.

"Excuse me," he said, brusquely interrupting him. "I have only just time to get back to dinner. You will see them this evening then, and communicate the result to me to-morrow."

"You may rely on it," replied the obsequious little lawyer, who thereupon conducted the great man to his door, seeming rather to grovel than to walk as he did so.

Florian's messenger stood obediently before him, while his master mechanically opened the letter returned him, and took out the notes he had enclosed.

"Have you any further commands for me, Sir?" asked the man.

"No! You may go. Stay! Tell Trouiller I want him, and order the brougham for a quarter to seven."

The French valet entered with a lively air.

"You must be particularly quiet in dressing me to-day, Trouiller, for my nerves are in a sad state. I was never more completely *bouleversé* in all my life."

CHAPTER XXI.

"Ma chère Pauvreté, si basse que soit ton extraction selon le jugement des hommes, je t'estime depuis que mon maître t'a épousée. Oh, pauvres ! que vous êtes heureux ! parcequ'à vous appartient le royaume de Dieu."

THE first time Griselda went to the city after removal to their new abode, her sister smiled to see the pains she took to disguise herself. She wrapped herself up, though the July sun was blazing fiercely, in an old woollen shawl, and wore a thick veil over her face, that no one might by any possibility recognise her. She was so fortunate as to obtain a parcel of good work—work that required greater skill in colouring, and was paid for at a higher rate; and employment at the same time was promised her for some months to come. She found that with the better light she could get on much quicker. She rose at five, and sometimes managed to steal a walk in the fresh meadows about

Dulwich, or over the wide common adjoining, or through the woods, before breakfast.

At first Millicent seemed revived by the change; but excitement to her was like the breath which fans a flame into brightness for a moment, but quickly wastes its little life. When Griselda tried to be gay, and spoke of their cheering prospects, a look at her sister was enough to sadden her. Besides, her omens were all unfavourable; even her black-bird sulked for the loss of hand-organs and street cries, and obstinately refused to reconcile himself to a country life.

"Why do you waste your time picking that straw-bonnet to pieces, child?" Millicent asked one evening, when Griselda had laid her colours aside.

The foolish little creature could never keep tears from her eyes at a word from Millicent which sounded like reproof; she rose to claim a kiss from her sister before she answered—

"I am going to the warehouse to-morrow, you know, and I thought I would leave the straw to be cleaned as I went, and call for it as I came back. They told me they could do it in a couple of hours."

"Why, you are getting quite extravagant,

Griselda. It is not a month since you had it cleaned before."

Griselda was hard put to it for an answer. She hurried away the straw, that her sister's quick eye might not examine it too closely, before she replied—

"No, but they cleaned it so badly at that place that all the spots have come out again. I mean to take it to a very respectable looking shop in Camberwell, where I dare say they'll do it well; and as I shall walk one way we sha'n't be much the poorer."

She would have suffered the rack rather than have told why she wanted the bonnet cleaned again. The truth is, that a death-watch had got into the straw, and sounded fearfully in her ear when she put it on. Place it where she would, the ominous tick still caught her apprehensive sense. She begged permission of the landlady to hang it up in the passage, but then she heard it when she went down stairs or when the door was open; and if she woke in the still night it seemed to steal up the stairs, and sound its warning of death at the very door.

"I hope," said Millicent, still referring to the bonnet, "that you will be able to buy yourself a new one soon, but we must be very

frugal just now, for I am going to be extravagant in one thing."

Griselda's face lit up on the instant.

"O, dearest Milly! how glad I shall be of any thing that will give you pleasure!"

"You know how often," Millicent continued, "you have asked me why I still seemed so depressed. You must have thought me ungrateful that I did not share in your pleasure. Indeed, I do feel thankful for the change—a happy one in every respect; but I cannot, like you, be content with mere existence. Confined as I am, I yet feel passions agitate my breast—yes, passions, dear child! or what would be passions if I were restored to health, and could take my part in life. I hate those who have injured us, and I cannot help it; I do not curse them, but I pray God that his justice may not tarry much longer. I bless you for your labours, though I sigh to see you degraded by performing every kind of menial office. You think all this is pride, and you are right; but it is pride I cannot get rid of, and which I would not if I could. It supports me under suffering—it sustains me against wrong. I would try to be contented with this quiet humble life, if I did not feel that I have something to do.

That conviction makes my heart bound so that I can scarcely lie still; it rouses me in the night, and keeps me sleepless."

Griselda put her handkerchief to her eyes, inexpressibly pained by the trouble of her sister's mind.

"I shall be relieved when I have told you what I have been thinking of," Millicent went on. "If we do not find some means of resisting those wicked men, they will take advantage of our absence to hurry forward proceedings, and perhaps succeed in barring our claims for ever after; and I am sure there must be plenty of honourable men who, for conscience and justice sake, would willingly take up our cause if they were but made acquainted with all the circumstances. The difficulty is to get an introduction to any one. There is but one way. We must put an advertisement in the paper. I do believe we shall meet with a favourable answer. All lawyers cannot be so bad as that villain Rock, and, whoever takes up our cause now, must for his own sake do it earnestly and faithfully."

"An advertisement in the paper!" exclaimed Griselda, startled by the novelty and boldness of the suggestion. "Oh, Millicent!

that would betray us to our enemies, and then they would come to us here, and we should never have peace again."

"I have thought of that, and have so drawn up the advertisement that no one will guess it proceeds from us. Take a pen, and I will tell you what to say. I know the proper form."

Griselda, at her sister's dictation, wrote—

"*To the Legal Profession.*—A Lady, who believes she has a title to a considerable fortune, but whose poverty prevents her from prosecuting her right, is desirous of an introduction to some professional gentleman of honour, who would consent to undertake her cause from motives of benevolence and a regard to justice, after the fullest information has been given. Direct to A. B."——

Millicent stopped to consider.

"We must make the address as general as we can," she said, "and therefore the more plain and business-like it is the better. I am only puzzled for a place where letters may be sent to. Stay, Camberwell is a good way off; you are going to the bonnet-shop. I dare say they would receive letters there, and, as you are quite a stranger to them, nothing could be told, even if enquiries should

be made. You can show them the advertisement, that they may see there is nothing discreditable in it."

When the advertisement was finished, Millicent seemed more easy. Griselda had some expression of delight and approval for every word. Whatever her sister did seemed to her incomparable. Had she commanded her to undertake a mission as perilous as that on which the mother of Aladdin was sent to the sultan, she would unhesitatingly have set forth on it. The next morning she found her way to the *Times'* office, and treasured up the receipt given her as if it had been a document of priceless worth, that she might show Millicent how faithfully she had fulfilled her instructions.

CHAPTER XXII.

Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala rides?

HORACE.

"Say, can you smile at dreams and magic spells, at witches, portents, ghosts, and miracles?"

MILLICENT had a great love of order. All her papers were sorted and labelled, and neatly tied up, so that she might refer to them at any moment, and she employed herself that day and the next (for they agreed it would be better to wait till evening of the second day before sending for the answers) in looking at those letters which would give a stranger the clearest view of the state of the suit at that time.

Griselda departed on her errand with a trembling heart, and scarcely needing Millicent's injunctions to make haste. She returned with a flushed countenance, and threw three letters on her sister's bed—

"There they are, Milly; I am dying with

curiosity to know what they say, but I wouldn't open them for the world, till you had seen them. I am glad there's three; 'there's luck in odd numbers,' you know," and she sang one of the charming verses of Rory O'More, to bear out her assertion.

Millicent inspected the letters before opening them. They were all sealed; two bore the impression of ciphers, but the third had a thumping coat-of-arms; and this letter, as the most hopeful, was kept to the last. The sisters were disappointed to find that the two first they opened were anonymous, merely requiring further information. But the third was more promising—

"Mr. Verulam Blossom, of the Middle Temple, having seen the advertisement of a Lady in this day's *Times*, soliciting an introduction to a professional gentleman of honour, thinks it probable he might be able to serve her, if she would favour him with an interview.

"Mr. Verulam Blossom will be at his Chambers every morning this week, between the hours of one and three.

"2, Cloister Court, Temple."

"We must lose no time, Griselda," said Millicent, after carefully going through the

note a second time. This is Thursday ; you must go to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow is Friday," Griselda replied gravely.

"Well, and what if it is, you silly creature ! Do you suppose that all affairs are to stand still on a Friday, and that no business is to be done that day because there is a foolish superstition in the mind of vulgar people about it ? You will really make me quite angry with your nonsensical whims."

"Oh, Milly, do not say that ! I will go through fire and water, if you tell me. Only I recollected the old rhyme just then—

' Thursday for losses
Friday for crosses,'

and wished the letter had come on one of the lucky days of the week—

' Monday for health,
Tuesday for wealth,
Wednesday for a good fortune.'

"Come here, dearest," Millicent said kindly ; and when Griselda, child-like, obeyed her, she kissed her moist eyes, and rallied her so cheerfully, opposing to her rhyme many such proverbs as, "good deed good day," and recalling, for she had been a diligent reader, a crowd of illustrious examples of heroes and

patriots, who, despising omens, had turned black predictions into glorious triumphs, that Griselda was ready, for the moment, to forswear all belief in portents, and even to fly in the face of them, that she might show her faith in duty and virtue.

The next morning, when ready to depart, after being furnished by Millicent with all necessary documents, and instructed in all she was to say, she stood for some moments with an old shoe hidden under her shawl, strongly tempted to ask her sister to throw it after her, yet deterred by the dread of meeting with a pettish answer.

"Now, child," cried Millicent, "you have every thing ready, and it is some time past eleven. Are you waiting for any thing? You are not afraid of Friday now, I hope."

"No," she answered, "I am only going to the cupboard to put these things away, in case any one should come up while I am gone."

With that she caught up the dress she had changed, and hung it up in the cupboard, quietly replacing, at the same time, her old shoe in the corner from which she had taken it.

All the way as she went, she tried to encourage herself by recollecting what Milli-

cent had told her the previous evening; the line from Pope's Homer she altered to

"The first best omen is my sister's cause."

But before she had got to the Elephant and Castle, the odious death-watch recommenced its boding note in her bonnet, and when she reached the Temple she was almost ready to faint with apprehension.

She had not much difficulty in finding Cloister Court, and on the doorway of No. 2, she read—"Third floor—Mr. Verulam Blossom." She mounted the dingy staircase with a palpitating heart, and when she came to the black door on which Mr. Blossom's name was painted, she waited a moment or two to recover herself. On looking about to discover some means of announcing her arrival, she discovered a small bell-handle at the side of the door, and this she pulled very gently. Presently she heard an inner door open, and then observed two sharp black eyes reconnoitring her through the slit made to admit letters. The door was then opened with a flourish, and she stood in the presence of Mr. Verulam Blossom himself.

In figure he was tall and somewhat scraggy, and he assumed an air of juvenility which

answered very well at a distance, but would not bear scrutiny. He had a quantity of black hair, and large black whiskers and mustaches. As, from the luxuriance of these ornaments, not much of his face could be seen, it was not easy at a first glance to determine his age, and he might have been set down for thirty, or a few years over. But, when his face was looked into, it was found to be as shrivelled as an ape's; and all the arts he used to disguise his years, then, did but add to them. By his wrinkles he might have been taken for sixty, but his real age, perhaps, lay between that and the prime he pretended to.

Mr. Blossom wore a very fine dressing-gown, with cord and tassels, a pair of red morocco slippers, a lilac shirt, and a black satin Joinville tie. He took great pains to exhibit his hands, which were very white, and studded with a profusion of rings.

"Mr. Verulam Blossom?" said Griselda, in a timid tone of enquiry.

"That is my name, madam," he replied, bowing gallantly. "Pray, walk in. I presume I have the honour of addressing the lady of the advertisement."

As Griselda stepped forward, he quickly

closed the outer door behind her. In obedience to the wave of his hand, she passed through an antechamber to his room of audience, Mr. Blossom staying to "lock up his bell;" a manœuvre he executed by putting a nail through the crank into the wall, so that the wire could not move. Returning to his room, he placed a chair for Griselda facing the light, and seated himself opposite to her, with his face in the shade.

The room was more cheerful than the exterior gave promise of. A drugget, which had once been crimson, covered the floor. The walls were hung with gay prints, some of which—portraits of actresses and ballet-dancers—Griselda could recognise as her own work. The stale fumes of tobacco—had Griselda been told that every barrister was by statute bound to smoke six hours daily, she would have believed it—hung about the apartment; and, altogether, it accorded well with the owner, both to a practised eye giving a very strong impression of the "man about town."

"Now, madam," said Mr. Blossom, "we are secure from interruption. I suppose I need scarcely observe to you that you will act most wisely in speaking to me without

reserve. The chamber of counsel is as sacred as the confessional; and," he added, looking on her closely, "the more entire the confidence between a legal adviser and his client, the better is it for the interests of the latter."

She began to speak in a low tone, but he interrupted her for a moment.

"If you will have the goodness to raise your veil, I shall hear you much more distinctly."

She obeyed him, and he fixed his eyes full on her modest countenance, while she gave, in simple artless narrative, an outline of her sister's case. Mr. Blossom took notes from time to time, particularly of names and addresses, and asked a few questions to show his comprehension of her statements.

"So," he said, "Mr. Laneton is your opponent in this suit, eh? Of course, every one has heard of him—the great capitalist. He is a powerful man, but I should like to take up your cause all the better on that account."

Griselda murmured that it made her happy to hear him say so, and that she was most deeply indebted to his generosity.

"When my feelings," he said with emphasis, "are interested in a case, and I

engage in it with spirit, I suffer nothing to drive me back; rank, wealth, influence, I regard as mere feathers. I think, if Mr. Laneton were to hear that I had taken up your case, it would make him tremble."

Griselda thought Mr. Blossom must be the very man for them.

"And now," he said, "to decide on the legal course to be pursued. What do you think, my dear," and he watched her narrowly as he spoke, "of indicting all your opponents, Mr. Rock amongst the number, for a conspiracy?"

"I dare say it would be very proper, Sir. I will ask my sister when I get home."

"Or," he continued, "for fraud—attempting to obtain an estate under false pretences? Ah! they must mind what they are about when I begin to look after them. If they attempt any of their tricks with me, I'll transport the whole of them."

"I am sure, Sir, it would serve them right, though I wish them no wrong. If you can frighten them, so as to make them give up all claim to the property, we shall be quite satisfied."

Mr. Blossom hummed a little—

"I see, my dear, you are of a kind dispo-

sition. Suppose we leave that matter open for the present, and decide on their fate when we see how they behave. I see my way through the whole affair very clearly. My own solicitors shall have the conduct of the case, under my immediate direction ; but you must promise to attend to every thing I say, and, as I take up your cause from the most disinterested motives, I hope I may count upon your gratitude."

"Indeed, indeed, you may, sir—and my sister's, too! I hope you will be able to come and see her soon."

"She is quite a cripple, I think you said?" he returned.

"Oh no! not a cripple—though she has been confined to her bed for so many years."

"Really I am so much occupied that I am afraid my numerous engagements will not allow me to get so far for some time, and you seem so capable of giving me all information that I think it is not necessary. You say you have no friends in London?"

She replied with truth, "Not one—they were quite alone in the world."

"Then, I'll tell you what I'll do, my dear. I'll give you a note to a lady, a particular friend of mine, who, I think, may be of great

assistance to you. You must treat her with the same confidence that you have done me."

While he wrote, Griselda could *only* think of the pleasure Milly would feel in listening to the account of her adventures.

"Can you deliver this note to-day?" he asked, looking up from his writing.

She replied not that day, as she *was* so anxious to get home, and relate what had passed to her sister, but she could take it to-morrow.

"To-morrow let it be, then. If you go about four or five you will be sure of finding her at home. I shall try to meet you there, if the Courts are up, as I may have something to communicate by that time. Notes of introduction are delivered open, you know, but I'll just read you what I've said—

"DEAR MRS. MONTGOMERY,—The young lady who will deliver this, Miss Ashley, has interested me extremely. I propose meeting her at your house to-morrow, on business, about five in the afternoon. Any kindness you can show her, will, I am sure, meet with a grateful return, and will be duly appreciated by, most sincerely yours,

" 'VERULAM BLOSSOM.' "

He conducted her to the door, receiving her thanks with great affability.

"Excuse me from accompanying you downstairs," he said, as he held the lock of the outer door in his hand, and just glanced through the slit, to see that no one was waiting outside. He gave her hand a warm squeeze to show the interest he took in her, and closed the door immediately she had stepped beyond the threshold.


CHAPTER XXIII.

O that the good Gods
Would set me free from this unhallow'd place,
Though they did change me to the meanest bird
That flies i' the purer air !

SHAKSPEARE.

It would be insulting the discernment of my readers to suppose that they have not already comprehended something of the true character of Mr. Verulam Blossom. There are plenty of such gentlemen having their abode in our inns of court, to the disgrace and scandal of their governing bodies. Some of these Blossoms are mere adventurers—others men of pleasure—and others again, with the worst features of both characters, make their ingenuity minister to their vices, and find equal enjoyment in preying on credulity and ruining innocence.

But Griselda saw nothing suspicious in any of the circumstances I have described.



She thought Mr. Blossom exceedingly kind—quite affectionate in his manner, she told her sister; but a thought of evil never entered her head. Had I set down her account of the interview, the reader would have regarded Mr. Blossom as an eminent philanthropist—standing in the highest rank of the legal profession for abilities and character. Part of what I have described she did not see, and the other part presented itself to her eye under the favourable colouring which her guileless heart imparted to it. Hopes which had been long dormant in Millicent's breast, revived at her sister's narration. She so praised the sense and discretion of her little girl, that Griselda cried for very joy, and would have gone to sleep quite happy, but that the death-watch, which had been quiet for some hours, suddenly woke up, and made himself audible to her anxious ear through the night, though she put the detestable bonnet in a trunk and covered it over with clothes.

Griselda was punctual to her appointment the next day, and first made her way to Fitzroy Square. She then looked about for a passenger to direct her to Queen Street, when—how fortunate!—her eye fell on the

elderly gentleman who had assisted her in her search for lodgings. He bowed to her, and civilly hoped she found her new home comfortable. On learning the address she wanted, he took her to the house, and waited till the door was opened and she had entered, before he bade her good-day.

Mrs. Montgomery was dressed so untidily that she thought it necessary to apologise to her little visiter for her appearance, by pleading an attack of spasms. On reading the note from Mr. Blossom, she insisted that the shrinking timid little girl should take off her bonnet, and take two or three glasses of what she was told was effervescing lemonade. As her colour sparkled and her spirits rose unaccountably high, the woman took her into a back room, and seated her on a sofa. Griselda was quite overpowered by her kindness when she took a pretty little gold watch from a drawer, and insisted on her wearing it in remembrance, as she said, of their first meeting. When the innocent child rose to depart, she pressed her to stay a little longer, as she expected Mr. Blossom almost every moment. A knock at the street door announced his arrival. The woman left the room, and presently Mr. Blossom entered it.

* * * * *

They had not been together many minutes when a piercing cry of terror rang through the house, and Griselda, inspired by her fears, with supernatural strength, burst from the grasp of the villain who had caught her in his arms, reached the room door, flew down the stairs and across the passage, and gained the street before she could be intercepted. With uncovered head, clenched hands, and set teeth, a face pale as death, but eyes sparkling with fury, she ran along, winged by fright, careless where she went, so long as she left that dreadful house behind her. A cabman, noticing her frantic fright, stopped his vehicle. She sprang to it, and implored him to drive her home as rapidly as possible.

Millicent, during her sister's absence, thought over what had passed with Mr. Blossom, and felt sanguine that his interference would soon put their cause in a more favourable position. If it should be won—if they were, after all, to become possessed of the estates, and of the immense sum accumulated—Griselda should have half of the property made over to her at once. And how happy she would be then! Florian would soon hear of them in their prosperity. They

would be in a condition to assist him then. Ah, the old fable! laid deep in the foundations of humanity whatever shape it assumes, Alnaschar and his glass-ware—the milkmaid and her pail—the market-woman and her eggs—what numberless illustrations is it constantly receiving in everyday life!

Millicent's pleasant reflections were abruptly disturbed by her sister's hasty entrance. Griselda had tried to calm herself on her way; but the sick girl instantly took alarm at her disordered appearance. Griselda had not the art to disguise any thing, and she stood too much in awe of her sister's penetration to attempt it. At what moment it was that the conviction of the infamous design against her had first flashed upon her mind she could not tell. Mr. Blossom had begun by talking to her of the suit; then he became more ardent in his protestations of the interest he took in her. Under pretence of securing their interview from interruption, he had risen to lock the door, then she looked in his face, and read there the secret of his vile passions, and the treachery of his black heart. How she escaped she could scarcely tell; she gained the door before him, and that was all she knew.

"But, oh!" she said, "dear, dear Milly! what shame is mine to have been in such a place! What will be said of us should it ever be known? I fear we are ruined—quite, quite ruined!"

Millicent's lip quivered, and a tremor began to shake her frame; but she did not weep with her sister. She took Griselda's head on her breast, kissed her a hundred times, caressed her with such deep tenderness, sympathized with such fond love in her affliction, that the weeping girl began to look up, and, like an infant fondled by its mother, to smile through the tears which stood in her eyes and on her cheeks. Before they had half finished discussing this sad adventure, a tap was heard at the door. Griselda hurriedly rose to open it, and, as she did so, Mr. Rock stepped into the room.

He greeted his "dear young friends" with his accustomed suavity, and reproached them for not letting him hear from them before.

"It was only by chance I learnt your address. No excuses, I beg. I know how apt we all are to postpone necessary duties from day to day—not to mention the highest duty of all."

Here he paused, turned up his eyes, and

shook his head; but, finding that the young girls both remained silent, he continued—

“I am sorry—truly sorry—that I have bad news to communicate; but glad—sincerely glad—that I am able—personally able—to break the tidings to you.”

Millicent gave Griselda a look, admonishing her to repress her agitation, and then said—

“Your presence, Sir, has sufficiently prepared us for bad tidings; pray, let us have them without further delay. To *break* bad news is a refinement of cruelty. We are prepared for the worst.”

“That is a most happy and enviable disposition,” he returned, “if it proceeds from trust [he turned his eyes upward again] and not from pride. The fears I expressed when I saw you last have proved too well founded. There is a writ out against you, Miss Millicent, for part of the costs incurred, and I have come, at some inconvenience, to announce the fact, that it may not be served on you unawares.”

“Do you mean to say,” cried Millicent, turning her pale face towards him, and fixing on him her brilliant eyes, undimmed by pain and weakness, “that they will

attempt to arrest me? Well, let them, but they will have to answer for my death."

Mr. Rock did not say that he thought her a rash, headstrong, wilful girl; but the holding up his hands, and the nodding to and fro of his head, sufficiently expressed that he thought so.

"You must recollect, my dear Miss Millicent, that the courts can only take cognizance of what is officially brought before them; you may be well or you may be ill, but, in a legal sense, you are perfectly well until you are proved to be ill. It is to be presumed that the writ out against you may be duly executed unless the contrary can be shown. *Omnia præsumuntur rite et solenniter esse acta, donec probetur in contrarium*—'in legal processes, it is assumed that all things are rightly done until the contrary be proved.' If you can get affidavits made to show that it will be dangerous to your life to move you, then you cannot be taken away from here; but from the fact—the *fact*, I say—of your recent removal from the city to this place, entirely of your own free-will and without any necessity, I should think it would be difficult to get such affidavits made."

Millicent smiled contemptuously.

"I am weak in body, as you see, Sir; but I am firm in will." She spoke the last words emphatically. "And," she added, "I am supported by convictions of which it is impossible you should know any thing."

It immediately occurred to Mr. Rock that she must refer to some devices of Satan, who, he did not doubt, was at the bottom of her obstinacy, as of every thing else evil—his acceptance of evil being always that which was opposed to his own views and interests. He laid, however, so much restraint upon his tongue, as merely to observe, that he trusted her convictions proceeded from the one real source of all truth and consolation.

"I presume," he said, rising and making a motion to depart, "I must be satisfied with the consciousness of having performed my duty—a painful duty, as I foresaw it would be. Miss Griselda"—she found it impossible to repress her emotion longer—"I am very sorry for you, sorry for you from the bottom of my heart," and he slapped his hand three times on his left breast, each thump a little beating the other in energy.

"Stay, Sir!" cried Millicent: "I am sure

you have something else to say. As you are here, pray, give us the benefit of your advice. What do you say we should do *now*?"

"Ah, hah!" he exclaimed, fetching a deep breath, "if I consulted my feelings, and not the hard necessities of the case"——

"Keep to the necessities of the case, pray," cried Millicent.

"Confining myself to them, as you desire, then, I must say that I think you had better give me full powers to make the best terms I can for you. I am afraid that the offer you rejected when I last saw you will not be made to you again; but if at once you acknowledge the error into which your prejudices led you—if you resign your vexatious opposition, and authorize me to announce your regret"——

Millicent could bear no more. Her pride rose to passion——

"Leave the room, Sir!" she cried in an imperious tone, "and never insult me with your presence more. Whatever calamities my evil fortune may have in store for me, can never equal the injuries inflicted by your insolence. Griselda!" she shrieked; "get rid of this man. It will kill me if he stays there longer!"

sequently deplored, "by the lamentable perversity of the old man reigning triumphantly in the hearts of those young women."

Griselda, returning to the room, sank on her knees beside her sister's bed. She was conscious of a change in herself since the morning. "Difficulty is a severe instructor." Though inured to hardship and exertion, she had never, until that day, been called on to think and act for herself—to rely on her own energies for safety. Now, excited by what she had gone through, and a pressing sense of danger, she felt impelled to make an effort for her sister's preservation.

Millicent, weakened by emotion, spoke more faintly than she was wont—

"What is it, dear child? Why do you wring my hand so earnestly? I know I am a great trouble to you"—

"Oh, Milly, Milly! do not say that."

"This is the crisis of our fortune. Do not despair! If the worst falls on us, why, then—[she smiled faintly]—we must say—

'We are not the first
Who with best meaning have incur'd the worst.'

Griselda, scarcely able to speak for sobbing, murmured—

“If you would but bear with me, dearest Milly, while I told you what is in my mind—if you would hear me patiently for a minute!”

Millicent raised her sister’s head to her own—wiped away her tears—and, looking fondly into her eyes, replied—

“It will comfort me more than I can tell to hear you. Look! am I not patient?”

Then Griselda spoke freely—

“I think I should go mad, dearest Milly, if all this fear rests on me through the night; indeed it is more than I can bear. Let me try to escape from it. For what are trials sent us but to make us humble”——

“Humble to God, Griselda!—not humble to injustice.”

“You know best, Milly; but what I think is, that we must see what humility may do for us with men. Have we not tried every means of resistance, and sank continually into deeper troubles? Think of what has passed to-day. You see how helpless we are. This Mr. Laneton”—Millicent trembled at the name—“may not be so bad as we think; he may be only pursuing what he believes to be his right. He has a fair name—why should he seek to oppress us? He is

very rich—why should he covet our inheritance unjustly? We hear he has but one daughter—surely he would feel for us if he knew all. Let me go to him—go this minute—he cannot be so cruel as that man who has just left us. He may mean fairly; perhaps he will see you himself. Somewhere I must go—something I must do—this night! Who so likely to afford us relief as he?”

Millicent heaved a deep, long-drawn sigh, as if there then escaped from her heart the righteous pride which had so long upheld it—the holy hope and trust which had raised her above all feeling of her infirmities. But Griselda comprehended not this; she knew not that with that sigh there was a heart-string cracked. Millicent would have repressed it if she could, but it burst from her with convulsive force. Lovingly she kissed her sister, as the gentle girl looked on her with alarm.

“Answer me truly, dear child,” she said in her softest tone, “whether this thought ever entered your mind till now?”

“Never!” Griselda exclaimed; “it was fear for your safety suggested it. All I can think of now is, that I must save you, cost me what it may.”

“Thank Heaven!” sighed Millicent, with a feeling of relief. “Had you been discontented before, then, indeed”—— She left the sentence unfinished, and began another. “Dearest, I cannot remember that you ever made me a request before. Kindest, best of sisters, do what you wish now. It must be for good. Yes—I am sure of that; though what will come of it I do not know. Go instantly, dear child; it is not dark yet.” She drew her sister closer to her, and imprinted one long passionate kiss upon her lips—“Mind, let nothing detain you from me long!”

Griselda, before she left, gave many and earnest charges to the good landlady to attend to her sister, and then hastened to St. James’s Square.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.





